

# UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

## **Fathers at Work: Challenges and Stereotypes Facing Fathers with Caregiving Responsibilities in Employment**

By

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### **Author Declaration and Word Count**

At no time during the registration for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy* has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.

Work submitted for this research degree at the University of Plymouth has not formed part of any other degree either at the University of Plymouth or at another establishment.

Relevant aspects of research training undertaken such as courses completed, conferences attended, presentations of research and published or other forms of presentation of creative research work.

#### **Publications**

- Submitted evidence was published by the House of Commons Women and Equalities Select Committee enquiry into 'Fathers in the Workplace', referred to in the final report and my recommendations were incorporated  
<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/358/358.pdf>

Conferences papers presented:


- Work and Family Researchers Network Conference (20<sup>th</sup>- 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2016, Washington DC) entitled *“Gender Role Stereotypes in Selection- A Exploration of the Potential Reversal of the Fatherhood Benefit and Motherhood Penalty in Selection Decision Making by UK Managers”*
- CIPD Applied Research Conference (15<sup>th</sup> December, 2016,London) ; *“Fatherhood Forfeits’ and Motherhood Penalties’ – An Exploration of UK management selection decision making of parent applicants”*
- CIPD Applied Research Conference (27<sup>th</sup> November,2017, Glasgow); *“Daddy Daycare- Caregiving Fathers, ‘fatherhood forfeits’ and the ‘paternal perimeter””*
- Work and Family Researchers Conference (20<sup>th</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> June, 2018, Washington DC); *“Is Daddy Daycare All it is cracked up to be -Caregiving Fathers and the ‘Fatherhood Forfeit?”*

## External Engagement

- PhD findings were referred to in a House of Commons debate regarding ‘Fathers in the Family’ (1<sup>st</sup> March, 2017),  
<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-03-01/debates/05992F83-3028-49FE-B6AC-2FADBA9EDBDB/FathersInTheFamily>
- PhD findings presented at the Fatherhood Network Scotland as part of the launch event for their #dadup campaign (14<sup>th</sup> June,2017, Edinburgh)
- PhD findings presented at the ‘Working Families’ Annual Conference (24<sup>th</sup> May,2018, London)
- PhD Findings presented at the Fatherhood All Party Parliamentary Group (19<sup>th</sup> November, 2018, Portcullis House, London)

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## **Abstract**

This study explores how caregiving fathers are perceived in contemporary employment to establish if this contributes to an understanding of the dominance of fathers in the role of 'breadwinner'. Much existing research in this area is based in the US, largely utilising students as participants, and has limited applicability to contemporary UK fatherhood. This study employs a mixed methods design underpinned by a social constructivist standpoint, with managers and working parents as participants. Understanding regarding the perceptions of caregiving fathers is sought through exploring how such fathers are rated when they apply for work utilising online vignettes, vignette based focus groups and semi-structured interviews. This study aims to contribute to understanding and knowledge in this hitherto largely underdeveloped area of research.

Data indicates that caregiving fathers applying for working arrangements that facilitate an active role in caregiving were rated the lowest when compared to a part-time mother applicant and/or a full-time father applicant. Data from interviews and focus groups provided insights that caregiving fathers face a number of challenges in the workplace, identified under three main themes; 'Think Child – Think Mum', 'Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving' and the 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers'. It is suggested that these three themes help explain the lower ratings in the online vignette and informs an understanding for the continued dominance of fathers in the role of breadwinner.

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## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Breadwinner Father**

A father with primary associations to the workplace who is both physically and emotionally distant from the family.

### **Breadwinner / Homemaker Model**

A model of organising family life in which the mother has primarily responsibility for the family and home and a father has primary responsibility for providing for the family. Within this model, the expectation is that a father will work on a full-time basis and a mother will either not work outside of the home or work on a part-time basis.

### **Caregiving Father**

A father who is aligned to the theoretical conceptualisations of an involved father, who takes responsibility for daily caregiving activities, is engaged with family life and attentive to children's needs, is emotionally close to their children and an active 'hands-on' sharer of child caring responsibilities. However, a caregiving father takes this further by taking a central role in providing day-to-day care for their children, moving away from 'secondary' parent status.

### **Stay at Home Mother / Father**

A mother/ father who does not undertake any paid activities outside of the home.

## **Chapter One - Introduction to Study**

### **Overview**

The landscape for contemporary working parents is widely assumed to have moved towards a position of increased equality in relation to both work and home spheres. It is widely acknowledged that modern fathers undertake a more active role in the 'hands on' parenting of their children than in previous generations and that mothers are making an increasing contribution to the labour market (Gatrell, Burnett, Cooper and Sparrow, 2014). This change is in part substantiated by UK societal and economic statistics which show a significant increase in the participation of mothers in the workplace, with the majority of contemporary couple families comprising two working parents (Office for National Statistics, 2017, *'Families in the labour market'* report). However, when both working parents are considered, a father is far more likely to be in full-time work, adhering to the conventions of a breadwinner (see Glossary of Terms) whilst a mother is more likely to be taking on the primary responsibility for the children in the family and undertaking less work outside the home in a way that facilitates this caregiving role. This was evidenced through recent data from the ONS who observed that 93.2% worked 30 or more hours a week compared with 50.5% of mothers (2018, *'Families in the labour market'* report). This holds true despite fluctuations over time and the age of the child throughout the typical eighteen years of conventional parenthood (Altintas and Sullivan, 2016; ONS, 2017, *'Families in the labour market'* report). This study resides within the context of this juxtaposition of an apparent societal discourse of a caregiving and involved father

(Gatrell et al, 2014) within a climate of limited evidential change to contemporary working patterns.

Fatherhood in modern UK society is consistently suggested to have shifted away from a primary focus on providing for the family to more active involvement in parenting. The archetypal 1950's imagery of a breadwinner father with primary associations to the workplace, and who is both physically and emotionally distant from the family, appears as an outdated representation of modern fatherhood (Burnett, Gatrell, Cooper and Sparrow, 2013; and ONS Labour Force Survey, March, 2018). This supports research from 2012 which found that only 13% of parents in the UK believe that a mother's primary association should be to the family whilst a father's primary association should be with breadwinning (Scott and Clery, 2013, cited by Connolly, Aldrich, O'Brien, Speight and Poole, 2016). Such findings point to an authentic move away from more traditional breadwinning ideologies, in which fathers are the "male dominant economic actor" (Connolly, et al, 2016; 2), towards a model of greater involvement and equality in parenting. The contribution of fathers to caring for their children has increased over time (Hook, 2006; and Norman, 2010), more specifically, Sullivan (2004) reported that the number of minutes that fathers spend with their children per day has increased to 36 minutes in 2000 from 8 minutes per day in 1975. Such an increase in involvement of fathers in the time spent with children has numerous benefits for children with those with highly involved fathers having been observed to do better at school, to have higher self esteem than those who do not, and are less likely to get into trouble as teenagers (Centre for Social Justice, 2017). More recent research undertaken by the UK charity, 'Fatherhood Institute', highlights that this growth in time spent by fathers with their children has



subsequently increased the level of perceived equality between parents and reduced the differential between the amount of time that mothers spend caring for children compared to fathers (“Cash or Carry? Fathers combining work and care in the UK”, 2017). Such an increase in equality with regard to parental involvement has been widely acknowledged in recent reports undertaken by the Trade Union Congress (Better Jobs for Mums and Dads’ 2017), Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) (*‘Flexible Working for Parents Returning to Work: Maintaining Career Development’*, 2017) and House of Commons Women and Equalities Select Committee ‘Fathers in the Workplace’ inquiry (House of Commons, 2017). In turn, the practices of working fathers appears to have evolved and recent research by ‘Working Families’ found that the vast majority of fathers in their study stated that childcare would be a key consideration when making their career decisions with over half of fathers dropping their children into childcare facilities, school etc. before going to work for over half of the time (Modern Families Index, 2018). An earlier report by ‘Working Families’ highlighted that in most organisations they researched there were flexible working opportunities, clear policy provision and an employers network targeted at both parents in the workplace. (*‘Working Families Benchmark Summary Report’*, 2011).

The UK policy agenda reflects the move towards greater involvement for fathers through numerous legislative changes introduced, for example through the stand-alone rights to paternity leave in 2003. More recently, in April 2011 Shared Parental Leave (SPL) was introduced which echoed societal moves toward an increasingly equal division of parenting responsibilities. At its inception, SPL was described as a step towards challenging the norms for working mothers, enabling a reduction in the

barriers women face when trying to fill senior roles and at the same time permitting an increased involvement for fathers in parenting their children. Some have gone as far as to say that the main premise of SPL was the creation of a “gender-equal utopia” (The Guardian, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/feb/06/utopian-thinking-build-truly-feminist-society>). However, this purported aspiration seems to bear little resemblance to the reality of working patterns for many UK working parents. There are many indicators suggesting that, despite the increasing contribution of mothers in the labour market, and a supposed increasingly active role of fathers in parenting their children, a climate of minimal actual change with regard to the working hours of fathers prevails (Shows and Gerstel, 2009; and Aumann, Galinsky, and Matos, 2011).

A key indicator of an increased position of equality would be a more equal uptake of working arrangements that allow for caregiving, such as flexible working, which can be conceptualised as a central mechanism to assist with the management of the two spheres of work and family. However, the division of such working arrangements remains gendered, implying that a position of equality between parents remains an aspiration rather than a reality. For example, fathers have been observed to be much more likely than mothers to believe they don’t have access to flexible working arrangements, such as flexi-time, working part-time and working from home (O’Brien, Aldrich, Connolly, Cook and Speight, 2018). This is supported by Scott and Clery (2013) who found little evidence for a more equal sharing of roles, with 38% of their participants believing that the model of full-time father and part-time mother continues to be conceptualised as the most effective way to combine work and family life. More specifically, fathers are widely observed to dominate the realms of full-time

employment, adhering to conventions of breadwinner, rather than adopting part-time approaches (Gregory and Connolly, 2008; Speight, Poole, O'Brien, Connolly and Aldrich, 2013).

The UK Modern Families Index recently support this observation by noting that 90% of fathers who took part in their index were working on a full-time basis compared to 51% of mothers, with only 4% of fathers working on a part-time basis compared to 40% of mothers who organised their working time in this way (Modern Families Index, 2018). A potential explanation for this has been offered by ACAS who observed that whilst mothers are well informed about all of their options with regard to flexibility when they become a mother, the position for fathers is more disparate. The ACAS report noted that some fathers have been found to conceal any work life conflict that they may encounter and actually report being afraid to ask for greater flexibility (*'Flexible Working for Parents Returning to Work: Maintaining Career Development'*, 2017). Such adherence to the breadwinner and homemaker model (see Glossary of Terms) evidences that any revolution towards gender equality is further away than may appear on the surface (Esping-Andersen, Boertien, Bonke and Gracia, 2013).

Whilst mothers can be observed to have a greater presence in the workplace than in previous generations, implying a move to a position of increased equality, research indicates that mothers still continue to undertake the larger share of caregiving. At first glance, this could be explained by the observation that mothers would be working fewer hours than fathers (Speight et al, 2013). However, research has found that even when mothers earn more and work longer hours than their partners, they still carry the majority of parenting duties (*"Fathers Involvement with Children' Report"*, Poole, Speight, O'Brien, Connolly and Aldrich, 2013; Lyonette and Crompton, 2015)

and have more direct involvement with children (such as positive engagement activities, indirect care and decision-making) than fathers, regardless of working hours (Poole et al, 2013). Similarly, whilst the aforementioned SPL can be interpreted as reflecting a move towards a position of increased equality for parents, the take-up of this leave has been minimal with recent statistics from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2018) placing take up at around 2%. Given that research has suggested that fathers often use annual leave after the birth of a child rather than paternity leave perhaps this low level of take up of SPL is not surprising (*'Flexible Working for Parents Returning to Work: Maintaining Career Development'*, 2017). This take-up rate indicates that the purported shifts in the level of involvement of fathers might not, in reality, have translated into the day to day working arrangements of fathers and its consequences might not be widespread.

The prevalence of more traditional models of arranging work and parenting responsibilities, which continue to associate fathers with full-time breadwinning and mothers with homemaking, facilitated through more flexible working arrangements, can be seen to create challenges for both working parents and employers. Specifically, with 'Brexit' looming, the need to maximise the talent and skills of the workforce is imperative due to the impending challenges in some industries with recruitment challenges due to increased restrictions in the labour market.

One of the most pervasive of the challenges facing working parents and employers is the relationship between the continuation of traditional parental working patterns and the maintenance of the gender pay gap, which currently stands at 9.1% in the UK (ONS, 2017, *'Families in the labour market'* report). The gender pay gap in the

UK is somewhat surprising as it exists in a climate in which more women graduate than men (UCAS, 2016) and the gap does not appear to emerge to any significant extent until later in life. ONS data highlights that once employees are in their forties, the gender gap starts to widen in increasing levels until retirement (ONS, 2018, *'Understanding the gender pay gap in the UK'* report). What is significant for this study is that it is widely acknowledged that the key difference between men and women during this period is the gendered impact of having children and the consequent implications of this on the working hours of parents (Institute of Fiscal Studies, *'The Gender Wage Gap'*, 2016; EHRC, 2016, Committee Evidence; and Fawcett Society, 2018, *'Close the Gender Pay Gap'*). Such is the prevalence of the differential impact of parenthood on mothers and fathers, that this issue was recently discussed by the House of Commons Women and Equalities Select Committee and highlighted as playing a part in the continuation of the pay gap (House of Commons Publications, 2016, *'The Gender Pay Gap-Second Report of Session'*). Through exploring the experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers this study will seek deeper understanding regarding the differential impact of parenthood on mothers and fathers, potentially uncovering explanations for the maintenance of the gender pay gap.

It appears that despite many societal and legislative changes, such as the introduction of SPL, a purported shift in the expected roles of fathers and a rise in the labour market participation of mothers, the actual and expected working arrangements of parents appears to remain intertwined with notions of breadwinning and homemaking. Consequently, when embarking on this research, considerable time was spent exploring existing theoretical frameworks to examine if they could

shed any light on this arguably out-dated dichotomy that appears to exist for employed UK fathers and mothers.

## **Theoretical Frameworks**

At the outset of this study it was envisaged that an exploration into the experience of both mothers and fathers would be central to investigating the supposed adherence to patterns of working arrangements that align to more traditional models of combining work and parenting. Initially, the focus was on exploring the research surrounding mothers to ascertain if workplace treatment of working mothers had a part to play in the maintenance of more traditional parental gender norms of working arrangements.

Much research in the area of mothers in the workplace has focused around the notion that working mothers face a varying number of penalties (Fuegen, Biernat, Haines and Deaux, 2004; Ridgeway and Correll, 2004; Correll, Benard, and Paik, 2007; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013). Such penalties are intertwined with perceptions of reduced commitment, impeded promotability and reduced hireability. Thus, the 'motherhood penalty' could be conceptualised as a potential contributing factor in the explanation of why mothers tend to revert to, or remain within, more traditional patterns of arranging work and home, such as working on a part-time basis to facilitate active involvement in the home environment. Due to the prevalence of pre-existing debates on the workplace experiences of mothers, this study explores parental workplace experiences through the lens of fathers to add to academic debate in this area. To

this end, a greater awareness of the experience and perception of caregiving fathers (see Glossary of Terms) in the workplace was essential to gain insights into how their experiences might impact upon the decisions made regarding their working arrangements.

Literature in the work and family arena that represents the experience of fathers in the workplace as the antithesis of mothers is well established, with fatherhood proposed to be associated with workplace 'benefits' and 'premiums' rather than 'penalties' (Loh, 1996; Hersch and Stratton 2000; Cuddy, Fiske and Glick, 2004; Correll et al 2007; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013). The nature of such 'benefits' and 'premiums' is variable but has been found to include increased likelihood of promotion, higher starting salaries and being viewed as more stable and committed than non-fathers and working mothers. Upon closer inspection, much of the research which identified the emergence of 'benefits' for fatherhood and 'penalties' for mothers were focused more on comparing mothers and fathers in full-time paid employment, in which fathers are arguably conforming to stereotypical gender norms by working full-time, while mothers who work full-time are contradicting such norms. Consequently, the pattern of 'penalties' and 'benefits' is, then, perhaps not surprising. Therefore, this study explores the literature surrounding gender stereotyping and role congruity which highlights that individuals would encounter challenges when they behave in a way perceived to be incongruent with the behaviour associated with their gender (Eagly and Karau, 2002; and Luzadis, Wesolowski and Snaveley, 2008). It is within this theoretical framework that the fatherhood literature that investigates the experience of fathers who behave in a way that could be conceptualised as incongruent with the parental gender stereotype of a father, was explored.

Research that investigated the workplace implications for fathers who have caregiving responsibilities for children, which is believed to be integral to contemporary fatherhood, is explored in depth. The work and family research arena is well established and largely consistent in espousing that while mothers face numerous challenges when combining work and family, the experience of fathers seemed to be more disparate (Fuegen et al, 2004; Correll et al, 2007; and Burnett, Gatrell, Cooper and Sparrow, 2013). Whilst the research in this area is limited in comparison to the research regarding mothers, an early theme from these literatures suggests that fathers who take an active role in parenting may experience workplace penalties that can be likened to that of working mothers (Berdahl and Moon, 2013). Such penalties for fathers who have caregiving responsibilities can be conceptualised to potentially hinder paternal involvement and perhaps explains the adherence to a more traditional role-congruent pattern of full-time working hours (Berdahl and Moon, 2013). Also pertinent to this debate is the literature that surrounds the discussion of masculinities, specifically the concept of hegemonic masculinity, which illuminates synergies between fatherhood 'benefits' and alignment to hegemonic norms of behaviour, with deviance from hegemonic norms being intertwined with less positive experiences for fathers (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Dalley-Trim, 2007; and Solomon, 2014).

It is essential to consider the existing theoretical frameworks as underpinning this study and reference to them is essential if a unique contribution to knowledge is to be established. The pre-existing theories regarding fatherhood benefits, motherhood penalties, gender stereotyping and role congruity, fatherhood penalties and



hegemonic masculinity have been utilised to inform the methods adopted within this study and used to inform the data analysis.

## **Research Focus**

These existing theories of penalties, stereotyping, role congruence and masculinities have all offered insights into the workplace experiences of fathers and partial explanations for the continued norms of fathers adhering to more traditional conceptualisations of fatherhood that aligns to breadwinning. However, whilst this provides a sound theoretical framework for this study, the experience and perception of fathers with caregiving responsibilities remains opaque. This study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of the workplace experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers, exploring if this understanding offers an explanation for the dominance of the breadwinning father model and in so doing moves to overcome some of the challenges with the existing research in this area. Such challenges are, first, that this field of research is dominated by studies undertaken in US workplaces. Whilst many of the issues raised are transnational and can be considered to be transferable to UK workplaces, the US differs from the UK in some significant ways with regard to the family, such as weekly working hours, annual leave entitlement, maternity and paternity arrangements. The largely less advantageous terms and conditions in the US may impact upon the extent to which US research is representative of the experience of UK fathers, therefore, further research in this area is necessary. Second, much of the existing research which informs this study has been undertaken with students as participants, with course credit offered for

participation. Whilst there are many merits of utilising student participants, the challenge with such samples for the purposes of research in the work and family arena is that the majority of participants are unlikely to be parents, might not have yet contributed to a workplace and are of a different age demographic to the majority of working parents. Whilst, this is a generalisation, it is plausible that data obtained from studies that utilise students, rather than participants who are in the workforce, are unlikely to provide accurate and detailed insights into the workplace experiences and perceptions of UK parents. To this end, this research explores the workplace experience and perceptions of caregiving fathers in the UK through the lens of the actors involved in the process. Specifically, it utilises working fathers, working mothers and managers as participants with the aim of obtaining a broader view of workplace experiences and perceptions than currently believed to exist. Working fathers have been chosen due to their ability to provide insight into their own personal experiences, and will be explored with participants who can be classified as more traditional working fathers who work full-time and align to notions of breadwinning, and caregiving fathers who are conceptualised as having caregiving responsibilities and thus align to more flexible working arrangements. Working mothers and managers have been identified as participants as they can provide a valuable insight into the workplace experiences of caregiving fathers. Such 'social actors', whose association with caregiving fathers varies from being married to a caregiving father, working alongside a caregiving father or managing caregiving father, are believed to be essential in the exploration of this issue.

The study focuses on employed working mothers, fathers and managers, with contracted working hours, full-time and part-time, provided by an employer. It does

not explore the experience and perceptions of caregiving fathers who may be self employed or work in a more precarious way. The reasons for focusing on this area was; firstly to enable comparisons across data sets and triangulation of the data, which would have been more complex and potentially prone to inaccuracies if there was greater variability with regard to employment status and; secondly, the researcher's access to organisations and individuals in employment was primarily in the traditional labour market of paid, regular employment rather than those operating in the GIG economy.

With the decision to direct research focus at fathers, attention then shifted in the study design to establish which type of fathers to focus upon. Fathers who reduce their working hours in order to take a more active role in parenting ('part-time working fathers'), fathers who relinquish paid work completely to look after children ('stay at home fathers') and 'involved fathers' were all considered. The term 'involved father' was identified by Lamb (2008) as a father who is accessible, engaged and takes responsibility for their children, and this type of father was initially considered to be the area of focus. However, in order to capture the experiences of fathers who have responsibilities on a day to day basis for their children (such as collecting children from school or dealing with a child's sickness) this definition does not appear specific enough. Therefore, this study has adopted the more explicit term 'caregiving father' which is used to describe a father who is involved in explicit care of their children such as changing nappies, playing, reading stories and indirect care such as purchasing the child's clothes (Cohen-Bendahan, Beijers, van Doornen, and de Weerth, 2015).

This study focuses on cohabiting and married heterosexual parents within the UK. Such a sample has been chosen as the researcher is UK based and this family type is the most prevalent and common in the UK (ONS, *Families in the Labour Market*, 2017). It is possible that the participants maybe overtly derived from the South West of England due to the location of the researcher and her professional network, however, efforts were made to obtain participants from a wider geographic area within the UK.

In order to capture broad data through which to explore the experiences of caregiving fathers, the methodological approach adopted is essentially that of mixed methods, viewed in part through the lens of social construction. Within this, a hermeneutical approach is utilised to seek understanding of this issue (Kinsella, 2006) in a full and broad way through the breadth provided by a mixed methods approach.

To support this an online vignette method is employed to establish if a caregiving father (represented as an applicant for a part-time role), mother applicant for a part-time role and working parent applicants for a full-time role are rated differently by manager participants during the recruitment process. This is followed by a focus group with managers exploring the same vignettes as previously to seek a deeper rationale for the ratings allocated in the online vignette method. The final method utilised by this study consists of semi-structured interviews with managers and working parents to gain a greater understanding of the workplace experience and perceptions of caregiving.

### *Study Aim*

The aim of this study is “To explore the experience and perception of caregiving fathers in contemporary UK employment”. This will be addressed through three specific research questions:

### *Research Questions*

Research question one: How are caregiving fathers rated when applying for working arrangements which facilitate an active role in caregiving?

Research question two: To understand the ratings awarded to caregiving fathers using focus groups and interviews

Research question three: What explanations can be offered for the continued dominance of fathers as the family breadwinners?

### **Thesis Structure**

To understand the experience and perception of caregiving fathers in contemporary employment, the study begins by exploring the existing literatures in this domain. Three chapters chart the existing literatures through ‘Work, Society and Parenthood’, ‘Gender at Work’ and ‘Fathers at Work’. However, by way of introduction, the dominance of women in pathways that facilitate caregiving, the lack of organisational emphasis on fathers and negative attitudes towards caregiving fathers all form part of the underpinning debate.

The first literature review chapter of this thesis, chapter two, explores the research literature that pertains to the nature of work, society and parenthood, to assist in the understanding of the historical and political landscape of these issues in the UK. Chapter two's purpose is to offer insights regarding the evolutionary journey to the way in which work, parenthood and society exist in the UK in 2018. It begins by noting the changes that have occurred over the past century with regard to societal expectations of men and women, the legislative framework and political landscape which impacted on both labour market participation and the division of parental responsibilities in circumstances in which two adults parent one or more children. The pervasive nature of gender norms is introduced in chapter two and this is highlighted within the realm of parenting, which is discussed in more depth in chapter Three. Additionally, chapter two explores the historical evolution of the role of a father, outlining the developments in the behavioural expectations of fathers over time, with the purpose of shedding light on how fathers are conceptualised in modern UK society.

Chapter three identifies the impact of gender in the workplace with the purpose of placing this exploration of parents' workplace experiences, specifically fathers, in context. This chapter explores the continued dominance of gendered disparities despite an increasingly equal societal positioning for men and women. The chapter introduces the concepts of masculinity and femininity and suggests that such concepts are central to guiding behavioural expectations in the workplace. The chapter continues by exploring the impact of gendered stereotypes and their influence on norms of behaviour, which can be observed to have wide-reaching implications. It explores that individuals encounter challenges if they behave in a

manner misaligned with the expected stereotypes of behaviour for their gender. Specifically, the chapter introduces the theoretical frameworks of motherhood penalties, fatherhood benefits, role congruity theory and gender stereotyping as well as hegemonic masculinities that are central to this study. Exploration of the academic literature regarding the implications of conforming and deviating is undertaken in preparation for a wider discussion of the terrain surrounding fathers in the workplace in chapter four.

Chapter four, which is the final literature chapter, emphasises the experience of fathers in the workplace, providing more detail on fatherhood benefits, gender role stereotyping and social role theory as well as introducing the notion of fatherhood penalties. In order to set out the context for the workplace experience of caregiving fathers the chapter explores the existence of behavioural expectations within the workplace for parents, emphasising the differing expectations of mothers and fathers. This chapter explores the notion that the workplace is a centre for the reinforcement of gendered parental stereotypes, with those who deviate away from them facing numerous sanctions. The nature and impact of such sanctions for caregiving fathers are explored in detail, to inform the identification of gaps in existing literature and the contribution to knowledge that is created by this study. This chapter is central to the development of the methodological approach adopted by this study and informs the research methods used.

The thesis then moves to chapter five and discusses the methodology and research methods adopted in this study, including exploring the options available to the

researcher and a rationale for the choices made. It is established that a constructivist paradigm of inquiry is most appropriate, with an ontological position of constructivism and an epistemological approach of interpretivism, specifically that of social constructivism. Central to this choice was a belief that the very notion of a 'father' is socially constructed, that is to say, that it can have varying interpretations dependent on the experience of individuals and their construction of reality. A hermeneutical approach has been adopted due to its alignment with 'seeking understanding'. Chapter five details that a mixed methods approach has been adopted, utilising both quantitative and qualitative data, with the aim of obtaining a fuller picture regarding the experiences and perceptions of fathers in the workplace. Quantitative data was obtained through an online vignette with manager participants specifically addressing Research question one, whilst research questions two and three are addressed through qualitative data obtained through vignette-based focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

The online vignette establishes at the start of the study if parental gender and caregiving responsibilities have any real-world implications with regard to workplace perceptions. The vignette tasks participants to rate four fictitious applicants: a caregiving father applicant for a part-time role, a mother applying for the same role and a mother and father applicant for a full-time role. Specifically, the vignette asks if parental gender impacts upon how fictitious parent applicants are rated against the measures of 'perceived competence', 'hireability', 'promotability' and 'workplace competence'. Utilising the same vignette, the focus groups with manager participants took a more qualitative stance, with the aim of identifying rationales for the ratings received by the caregiving father to permit a deeper understanding of the perceptions of caregiving fathers. The final method employed in the study is semi-structured



interviews with questions informed by the review of the literature and the outcomes of the focus groups and online vignette. The semi-structured interviews create an opportunity to explore the experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers with working parents and managers.

Chapter six presents the quantitative results obtained from the online vignette, specifically addressing research question one, through the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The chapter begins with a representation of the descriptive statistics that emerged from the data to establish, in a general sense, if differences exist between the four conditions (part-time father applicant, part-time mother applicant, full-time father applicant, full-time mother applicant) against the measures of 'workplace commitment', 'hireability', 'promotability' and 'perceived competence' before undertaking more statistically powerful tests utilising Analysis of Co-Variance (ANCOVA) (Correll, et al, 2007). The results of the ANCOVA testing are then presented which provide more in-depth statistical analysis through initial multivariate testing utilising between and within subject designs alongside the results of the Estimated Marginal Means (EMM).

The thesis then moves to chapter seven, which presents the qualitative results. This chapter explores the data gathered through the vignette based focus groups and semi-structured interviews with the purpose of providing insights into the quantitative data, specifically addressing research questions two and three, within the overall aim of exploring perceptions and experiences of caregiving fathers in contemporary employment. A four-stage coding strategy was utilised to analyse the qualitative data and from this, the data were divided into three main themes, each of which contained

sub-themes to allow an in-depth presentation and establishment of areas for more detailed discussion in chapter eight.

The penultimate chapter of the thesis, chapter eight, discusses in depth the qualitative and quantitative data presented in chapters six and seven, addressing each research questions in turn. Central to this chapter is the exploration of the potential existence of patterns between the data within this study and the known literatures with the aim of building new knowledge for the UK context.

The final chapter of this study, chapter nine, turns to the reflective account of research praxis. This chapter outlines both the practical lessons learned from executing the study and the theoretical and methodological insights garnered so that other researchers might benefit from them. Additionally, this chapter demonstrates personal and critical reflections offering discernments on the wider study of work and family. Finally, the chapter outlines the contributions to knowledge made by the study and provides clear and unequivocal answers to the research questions which are re-stated here:

Research question one: How are caregiving fathers rated when applying for working arrangements which facilitate an active role in caregiving?

Research question two: To understand the ratings awarded to caregiving fathers using focus groups and interviews

Research question three: What explanations can be offered for the continued dominance of fathers as the family breadwinners?

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has introduced the study, setting out the nature of the problem, its context and the theoretical frameworks in which it resides. It has demonstrated that an adherence to the breadwinner model for contemporary fathers exists despite appearing incongruent with popular conceptualisations of modern fathering. It is suggested that the UK academic exploration of this dichotomy appears to be in its infancy and thus, the importance of a study of this nature was highlighted. The philosophical and methodological assumptions underpinning the study have been introduced to permit a wider exploration in the corresponding chapters. The structure of the thesis was explained, with the rationale for content outlined to prepare the reader for the forthcoming chapters. The study now moves to chapter two which explores the literature pertaining to the nature of work, society and parenthood which underpins the empirical part of this study.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Work, Society and Parenthood**

Academic literature is largely consistent in showing that the nature of work, society and parenthood has altered over the last 150 years (Carr-Ruffino, 1993; Charles,

1993; Pleck and Pleck, 1997; Barnett and Hyde, 2001; and Burnett, Gatrell, Cooper and Sparrow, 2010). This chapter will chart the way in which this has occurred in the UK with historical contexts explored to provide greater understanding of the origins of gender role expectations, both in the workplace and at home. This context aims to provide greater clarity regarding the prevailing differentials that exist between the sexes within the realms of occupational, pay and ultimately, the focus of this research, caregiving fathers in the workplace. This chapter commences by exploring biological differences between men and women, and the implications of these on the societal gender roles with the role of childhood experiences and specifically parental treatment proposed as central to the early establishment of gender roles. The chapter then turns to the family and the historical development of family responsibilities, beginning with the impact of the rise of industrialisation and a consequent emergence of the role of father as a more absent figure. The increase in female participation in the labour market is also explored at length, and the impact of the World Wars, development of birth control, rise of service industries, gendered implications of recession and technology are all suggested to have had a part to play. The increase in female participation is proposed to have had an impact on the family, for example, if mothers increase their working hours outside of the home what are the implications of this on the day-to-day division of caregiving responsibilities? The discussion in this chapter underpins the more in-depth exploration which takes place in chapter three. This chapter delves into the issues of occupational segregation and gender pay differentials, exploring them alongside the recent legislative changes that attempt to reduce such gender inequity. However, an in-depth discussion will be reserved for chapter three when these issues are given the more detailed exploration they deserve. As the chapter draws to a close, attention is focused on how the changing

nature of work and society has specifically impacted on fathers. The expectations of fathers in 2018 can be considered to be intertwined with conceptions of involvement and caregiving behaviour, which can be seen as a deviation from more traditional breadwinner mentalities. However, it appears that a contradiction exists as, despite the increase in female labour market participation and an apparent reshaping of what constitutes a 'good father', fathers can be considered to remain in a secondary position to mothers in respect to caregiving. This happens both in society and in the workplace, which is central to this study and is explored in more depth in the remainder of this literature review.

### **Biological and Socially Constructed Differences Between the Sexes**

Knowing where to start a literature review of this scale is challenging due to its wide-ranging nature and the need to ensure that it accurately underpins the empirical part of this study. To this end, it seems sensible from the outset to acknowledge that some of the differentials in workplace experiences of men and women are considered as having arisen as a result of fundamental biological differences and the extent of these biological differences is central to academic argument.

Some theorists postulate that men and women have different brain sizes, strength levels, ability to multi-task, mathematical ability, spatial and reasoning skills (Lynn and Mulhern, 1991; Lynn, 1992; Furnham and Rawles, 1999; Born, Pietrowsky, and Fehm, 1999; and Giddens and Sutton, 2013). Whilst the extent of biological differences remains debatable, some undeniably biological differences exist between men and women with regard to the family. For example, only women can become

pregnant, give birth and breast feed. This results in mothers traditionally being central to caregiving, taking on the role of nurturers, and presumed to be more biologically suited to that role in the early stages of child development (Parsons and Bales, 1955; and Fischer and Anderson, 2012). Similarly, Charles (1993) commented that women initially make a greater biological investment in the family through pregnancy, therefore, parental gender norms can be seen as 'natural' (see, for example Crompton, 1997) with women being more suited to the role of childcare, due to assumed qualities of nurturance and warmth (Eagly and Steffen, 1984).

'Nature' also has its part to play with regard to men as it is proposed that since 'nature' dictates that men are generally larger and stronger, therefore the male should hunt for food and protect their family, undertaking the role of provider (Parsons and Bales, 1955; and Carr-Ruffino, 1993). However, critics argue that much of the conclusions regarding physical differences is based on analogies with animals and whilst it might be the case that it is women who spend a significant time caring for children, this may not be a result of biological differences but more related to social construction of gender roles (Giddens and Sutton, 2013). This opposing viewpoint is the 'nurture' argument, which advocates that it is the reinforcement of expected gendered behaviour that impacts upon the nature of work and society rather than any actual 'natural' differences *per se*, with gendered behaviour that is culturally appropriate being rewarded for both sexes, nurturing and dependent behaviour for women, strength and independence for men (Carr-Ruffino, 1993; Lorber, 1994; Marecek, 1995; and Giddens and Sutton, 2013). Therefore, this suggests that parental gender roles might have both a biological and social underpinning (Eagly, 1987; Wood and Eagly, 2002), with the social construction of the gender roles being considered to

have deeply embedded roots which need to be understood in order to explore any differences between parents in the workplace and in contemporary society more generally (Eagly and Steffen, 1984).

Early theorists such as Freud and Erikson pointed to an establishment of disparities in gender roles emerging from childhood as a consequence of different early socialisation experiences underpinned by inherent biological differences (Freud, 1953; Erikson, 1968; Trivers, 1972; Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982; Buss, 1989; Buss and Kenrick, 1998; and Barnett and Hyde, 2001). More recently, researchers have proposed that early socialisation experiences might be more influential than physical differences with the social construction of gender roles occurring through stereotypes imposed by parents, teachers and peers during upbringing (Silverstein, Conroy, Wang, Giarrusso, and Bengtson, 2002; and Giddens and Sutton, 2013). Either way, research findings are consistent in saying that parents have a key role in influencing young children with regard to gendered behaviour (Kaplan, 1991; Berryman-Fink, Ballard-Reisch and Newman, 2012; Santrock, 1994), with the views of children being shaped by "the physical and social settings within which they live, culturally regulated customs and child-rearing practices, and culturally based belief systems" (Harkness and Super, 1995; 226).

From as early as the age of two, awareness exists of gender role differences (Weinraub, Clemens, Sockloff, Ethridge, Gracely and Myers, 1984), with children beginning to use gender stereotypes to navigate their world in relation to activities, objects, and occupations (Cowan and Hoffman, 1986; Fagot, Leinbach, and O'Boyle, 1992). The gender role attitudes of children have been found to be significantly

affected by their exposure to gendered behaviour and the actions and behaviour of parents (Marks, Lam, and McHale, 2009) and the extent to which desired behaviours are reinforced with approval or disapproval and sanctions for deviation (Mischel, 1966; and Santrock, 1994). With regard to work and family, it has been found that as children get slightly older some learn that it is unacceptable for fathers to stay home and that mothers are better parents (Sinno and Killen, 2009). This is very pertinent for this research as it implies that the workplace perceptions and experiences of caregiving fathers might be affected by not only the upbringing of the father themselves but also the upbringing of their work colleagues.

Academic literature is largely consistent and shows that gender related inferences are made at a young age (Martin, Wood and Little, 1990; Biernat, 1991; Lobel, Bempechat, Gewirtz, Shoken-Topaz, and Bashe, 1993; Lobel, 1994; Harkness and Super, 1995; and Lobel, Gruber, Govrin, and Mashraki-Pedhatzur, 2001) and differences in beliefs regarding competence in certain ages are apparent at primary school when performance is largely equal (Eccles, 1983). Even in childhood, a difference has been observed between boys' and girls' judgements based on gendered stereotypical expectations, with boys being found to be judged more harshly by peers than girls (Beloff, 1992; Lobel and Menashri 1993; and Lobel, 1994). Additionally, girls are expected to be nurturing, deferential, affiliate and passive with boys expected to be autonomous, aggressive, dominant, and achievement oriented (Nadler and Stockdale, 2012).

Gender messages have been observed to be transmitted through differences in treatment of sons and daughters and different expectations of behaviour dependent



on gender (Jacklin, DiPietro, Maccoby, 1984; Martin et al, 1990; Thorne, 1993; and Lobel, 1994). Such treatment is often unconscious and involves subtle and influential inferences regarding gender acceptable behaviour (Arliss, 1991; Haslett, Geis and Carter, 1992; and Santrock, 1994) and has been reported to emerge as soon as within 24 hours after birth (Rubin, Provenzano, and Luria, 1974; Sidorowicz and Lunney, 1980; Pomerleau, Pomerleau, Bolduc, Malcuit and Cossette, 1990; Grieshaber, 1998; Mondschein., 2000; and Axinn, Young-DeMarco and Caponi Ro, 2011). The purported differentials in treatment between boys and girls can manifest in many ways, including dressing in gender specific colours, giving gender specific toys (Thorne, 1993), encouraging playing with dolls and housekeeping in girls and playing with trucks and engaging in sports activities in boys (Eccles, Jacobs, and Harold, 1990; and Thorne, 1993) and rewarding gender aligned play behaviour (Carter, 1987). Often girls' rooms can be found to be pink in colour and contain manipulative toys, whilst boys' rooms have more blue, sports equipment, tools, and vehicles (Pomerleau et al, 1990). Similarly, boys are more likely to have maintenance chores around the house, such as painting and mowing the lawn, while girls are likely to have domestic chores such as cooking and doing the laundry (Basow, 1992). More recently, Sheryl Sandberg, CEO of Facebook, commented that this gendered division of chores actually results in a 'toddler wage gap' so that boys were being paid more for household chores than girls (World Economic Forum-Davos, 2016).

Psychologists suggest that by raising children in a way that tends to foster consistency with traditional gender roles, boys can be seen to be at an advantage once they enter the labour market (Corcoran and Courant, 1987; and Jenkins, 2004). For example, it might be perceived that girls make their choice of GCSE subjects

independently, however, if they have been raised in a culture that places more value on feminine characteristics, this might impact on their choices which might be detrimental to them in the longer term (Greene and Kirton, 2015). This topic will be returned to in chapter three when the impact of sex typing and occupational segregation in the workplace are explored.

Such childhood stereotyping can have a long-term impact on caregiving activities when children grow up and become parents themselves with parental division of labour seen as a key indicator of adult behaviours (Cunningham, 2001). Boys assigned non gender-stereotyped tasks are more likely to have a higher level of involvement as men when they have a family of their own than those men who were not (Gerson, 1993; Pleck, 1997; and Benson and Robbins, 2016). Similarly, boys with involved fathers are more likely to be involved with their own children, display gender equality in their behaviour with their own children (Hofferth, 1999; and Levto, van Der Gaag, Greene, Kaufman, Barker, 2015) and their daughters are likely to have higher career aspirations than those with fathers who are less involved (Croft, Schmader, Block and Baron, 2014). This is further discussed in the next chapter in exploring the impact of childhood experiences on parental behaviours in adulthood.

Thus far, this chapter points to biology and childhood experiences as being integral to the establishment of individual gender roles in society. However, it is necessary to move more critically into understanding the origins and evolution of work, society and parenthood if we are to understand the experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers in the historical through to modern-day UK workplace.

## Historical Evolution of Work, Society and Parenthood

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the role of mothers was overwhelmingly expected to be in the home or within a family business, with tasks undertaken largely dependent on the occupation of the husband and the demands of being a wife and a mother, particularly for the middle classes (Matthaei, 1982; Pennington and Westover, 1989; Carr-Ruffino, 1993; and Ward, 2008). During this period, paid work and unpaid work often co-existed in the home (Hilbrecht, Shaw, Johnson, and Andrey, 2008) with fathers considered by many to have the role of 'moral overseer' and 'protector' with ultimate responsibility for the family (Pleck and Pleck, 1997; and Broughton and Rogers, 2007). This time was characterised by patriarchy, defined by Tosh (2007) as 'father-rule', with patriarchs holding the majority of power over their families (Knibiehler, 1995). Pleck and Pleck (1997) proposed that the role of a 'colonial father' typifies this era, with fathers having responsibility for educating the children, advising them and guiding them into an appropriate occupation.

Towards the middle to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the emergence of industrialisation, the role of father was considered to be changing to that of 'distant breadwinner' (Burnett et al, 2010), which saw fathers undertaking new roles away from the family and paid work becoming more distinct and separate from the household (Hilbrecht et al, 2008). This absence, Burnett et al (2010) argued, resulted in increased decision-making authority of the mother within the home (see also Pleck and Pleck, 1997; and Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth and Lamb, 2000) and diminished emphasis being placed on the importance of father-child relationships (Cabrera et al, 2000). A 'good father' began to be associated principally within the workplace

(Halford, 2006), moving away from moral leadership to economic support (Pleck and Pleck, 1997) with primary responsibility for paid work and breadwinning (Allard, Hass and Hwang, 2011; and Crompton, 1997). In turn, mothers were established as homemakers with primary responsibility for domestic work (Crompton, 1997; and Allard et al, 2011). At this point linkages can be made to the earlier discussion of the nature/nurture debate as similarities between the early roles of fathers as hunter-gatherers and mothers as caretakers and the presented roles of breadwinners and homemakers are apparent (Carr-Ruffino, 1993; and Charles, 1993). The changing role of the father is essential for this study and will be explored in more depth later with a view to seeking wider understanding about the role of fathers in modern UK society.

After the turn of the century gender roles in the labour market began to change and by 1913 nearly a quarter of women worked outside of the home and women over the age of 30 had obtained the right to vote, albeit with limitations (Light, 1999). However, labour market participation was greatly affected by the adoption of 'marriage bars', which prohibited the employment of married women and the retention of women employees after they were married (Goldin, 1994; and Cappelli 1999). This may explain why women constituted 20% of the workforce yet only 10% were still in the workforce over the age of 40 (Light, 1999). The participation of women was to increase as a result of World War 1 (1914-1918), which saw a significant shift in female labour market participation due to the absence of men who were away fighting in the war. It is argued that women emerged from the war with increased confidence and independence, which caused frustration when the war was over and a position of economic and social dependence resumed (Bland, 2005).

The labour market was to shift again with the great depression of the late 1920's and early 1930's, which saw female participation, many of whom were mothers, increase once again in direct response to the unemployment of fathers. This increased participation of mothers resulted in growing financial decision-making power within some families and the beginning of the dilution of the role of the father as provider (Elder, 1998). This was further increased as a result of World War II (1939-1945) which saw a dramatic increase in workplace female participation (Barnett and Hyde, 2001). This increased demand for workers (Maund, 2001), particularly women (married and unmarried) saw those undertaking jobs that had been previously performed by men (Carr-Ruffino, 1993). This period is typified as a time of real change for women and mothers, with women gaining more power in the home and the workplace.

Female labour market participation reduced after the war ended (Barnett and Hyde, 2001) and the 1950's were typified as an era when a mother's place was largely expected to be within the home looking after her children (National Child Development Survey, 2008). There was a high level of sex segregation, gender imbalance and stability in work and family roles (Barnett and Hyde, 2001), with once again a female homemaker and male provider emerging as a cultural norm. It is argued that for some families the role of 'excessive mothering' emerged, as mothers struggled to revert to traditional pre-war patterns, resulting in mothers taking a more overbearing mothering role (Burnett et al, 2010).

Many women found that during wartime they had demonstrated skills capabilities and found that managing a home and job could be satisfying (Carr-Ruffino, 1993). This was coupled with the streamlining of housework (through labour saving devices and prepared foods), which allowed women to dramatically reduce the amount of time they had previously spent on tasks at home (Goldin, 1994). The number of women in the labour market continued to increase from the late 1950's (Matthews and Rodin, 1989) and there was an emergence of a distinctive role for part-time working for married women (Charles, 1993).

Such part-time working arrangements had been adopted during the war and continued after the war was over which saw new avenues for women to combine family and working life, and can be viewed as being considerably straightforward to join and exit (McQuaid, Bond and Fuertes, 2009). One in five women were working part-time in the 1950's (Ward, 2008), however it is important to acknowledge that part-time working was not without longer term career implications, which are discussed in the next chapter (Mcintosh, Mcquaid, Munro, Dabir, 2012).

Alongside this, the emergence of the role of the father took place, particularly as a 'sex role model' in some families, with the father having a key role in raising the children (Pleck, 1997; and Burnett et al, 2010). Whilst not eliminating the prevailing role of the father as a 'distant breadwinner', this change emphasised as a partial result of post-war welfare policy (Perrons, 2009), which demonstrated a shift toward a more 'modern-involved dad' (Cabrera et al, 2000; 127). This arguably had occurred steadily from this period (Smith, 1995).

It is apparent that transitions during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century began which would impact on the nature of work, society and parenthood as it appears today. World War 1, the Great Depression and World War II resulted in an increase in female workforce participation, albeit often temporarily, which would have considerable implications on the family and the gendered roles within it. However, it was not until the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the transitions would gather pace.

One of the most important set of changes were about birth control. The 1960's saw a raft of developments with regard to birth control (Goldin, 1994; cited by Esping-Andersen and Billari, 2015) and the development of the contraceptive pill (1960), which can be seen to have shifted the landscape further as did the development of the National Health Service. The Abortion Act (1967) which legalised abortion and the Family Planning Act, (1967) which legalised the provision of contraceptive advice regardless of marital status, gave women more control to plan children and control their own lives (Carr-Ruffino, 1993) and more options surrounding marriage and childbirth (Perrons, 2009). These changes are likely to be linked to the steady decline in average family size, for example, for women born in 1966, 1.91 children was the average family size, compared to 2.36 children for women born in 1939 (ONS, '*Cohort Fertility*' report, 2011). This decline in family size can be seen to have affected the amount of time women spent raising children which resulted in more married women working (Chafetz and Dworkin, 1986). Additionally, 1960 saw the full implementation of the right to equal pay in teaching and in the civil service (1961) and the Labour government's commitment to equal pay for all (although there was not legislative change until 1970 with the Equal Pay Act). All three of these are likely to have had an impact on women's labour market participation and resultant repercussions for the

division of household labour. Similarly, the large expansion of university places in the 1960s provided more opportunities for women (NCDS, 2008), resulting in a rising education level (Grodent and Peere, 2013) which is likely to have further contributed to shifts in gender roles. These changes were not immediate, and whilst there was a post war increase in the number of women entering higher education (Charles, 1993), in the late 1960s only around one quarter of graduates were women (Perrons, 2009). This is a very different landscape compared to the contemporary one in which more women graduate than men (UCAS, 2016).

Charles (1993) argues that as a result of the increase in women entering higher education and an emerging gap between their ambitions and domestic expectations, a second wave of feminism occurred in the late 1960's/early 1970's. This period saw the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women's suffrage, the Ford Machinist strike for equal pay (Banks, 2006), the establishment of a National Joint Action Committee for Women's Equal Rights (NJACWER) (later to become the National Women's Coordinating Committee) and the establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> National Women's Liberation Movement conference. The movement made initial demands for equal pay, equal education and job opportunities, free contraception and abortion on demand. As the women's liberation movement progressed, demands intensified to include financial and legal independence and abolishment of all laws that perpetuate male dominance and male aggression towards women (Coote and Campbell, 1982; Bird, 1996; and Dobash and Dobash, 2003).

As a consequence of the feminist movement, a number of legislative changes were introduced in the 1970's which illustrated the start of increased gender equality



(Charles, 1993; and Perrons, 2009) and improved acceptance of mothers working outside of the home (Goldin, 1994). However, these steps were tentative; for example, whilst The Equal Pay Act became law in 1970, it was not fully implemented until 1975. Even when implemented, some employers used the time between the passing and enactment to reorganise their organisations to ensure maintenance of gender segregation, reducing the overlap between men and women's jobs and thus weakening the strength of equal pay claims (Snell, 1986; and Charles, 1993). Similarly, whilst the Sex Discrimination Act came into force in 1975, making it illegal to discriminate on the grounds of gender, the Act did not include unemployment benefits. This was critical as it further compounded women's financial dependence on men (Charles, 1993).

By the end of the 1970's, the central importance of the Women's Movement in employment and gender related developments began to decline (Charles, 1993). However, gender roles both in the workplace and at home would continue to alter as a consequence of the restructuring of the labour market in the 1970's, especially within manual and industrial work (Crompton, 1997; and Stanworth, 2000). During this period the economy shifted from being primarily based on manufacturing industries, such as coal and steel, towards service work (Stuart, Grugulis, Tomlinson, Forde and MacKenzie, 2013) and skilled non-manual work (Brannen and Nilsen, 2006) which increased the demand for traditional female service sector labour (Galor and Weil, 1996; and Stanworth, 2000). Besen (2007) proposed that this shift from manufacturing to service industries was central to the reduction of conceptualisations of fathers as breadwinners, enabling more women to work outside of the home and combine work and parenting, resulting in a reduction of breadwinning responsibilities

placed on fathers. In parallel to this, potentially as a result of businesses needing to be more flexible and competitive due to increased foreign competition (Kalleberg and Marsden, 2012), society became more information-led which resulted in the creation of new roles which attracted more women into industry (Carr–Ruffino, 1993). This trend towards ‘knowledge work’ (Newell, Robertson, Scarbrough and Swan, 2002) focusing on the talent of the individual members of staff, seems to have provided opportunities for reduced gender inequality as issues such as physical strength, which historically had given men an advantage, had been removed (Eikhof, 2012). These emerging roles offered greater flexibility in working hours, contracts, status and locations (Perrons, 2009) and are likely to have had an impact on labour market participation as such working arrangements easing the ability to combine a family and work. ONS data (2013) supports the existence of a link between more flexible working and female participation and reports an upward trend in the proportion of women in employment dating back to 1971.

From the 1950’s to the late 1970’s, changes occurred in society that directly affected the labour market and resulted in increased female participation in work. Family planning options, changes in the type of work available, and the arrangement of this work, have all had their part to play. By late 1970’s the number of women in work was increasing and the changes in policy implied increased equality in the workforce. As a consequence, the prevalence of the concept of the sole male breadwinner began to decline and it is suggested that there was a purported phenomenon of the ‘crisis of the breadwinner father’ around this time (Gillis, 2000; and Brannen and Nilsen, 2006). Pleck and Pleck (1997) suggested that towards the end of the decade the role of father developed into one of a ‘new nurturant father’ where men took an active role

in their children's lives and daily care (see also Fox, Bruce and Combs-Orme, 2000; Lamb and Tamis-LeMonda, 2004; and Saracho and Spodek, 2008). However, the extent of this evolution is unclear as whilst time-use surveys around this period often point to an increase in fathers' domestic roles (Kitterød, 2002), this increase is not equal to the increase in mothers' labour market participation (Kitterød and Peterson, 2006).

The 1980's in the UK were characterised by industrial unrest, privatisation and the enterprise culture of Thatcherism (Allen and Truman, 1993). Carr-Ruffino (1993) argues that these moves, which step away from the traditional hierarchal organisation, can be considered to have reduced many of the more explicit traditional barriers to labour market participation faced by women. During this time the UK saw a recession, resulting in a sharp increase in inactivity rates for both men and women, however, the increases in employment inactivity were larger for men than women (ONS, 2011, *'Impact of the recession'* report). Recession can be considered to be a key factor in the reduction of the breadwinning father norm, as an impact of recession for many families had been a need for dual earners, or for the mother to become the breadwinner, which had implications on the division of caregiving responsibilities in the home (Besen, 2007). During this period the majority of new jobs created were part-time and in the service industries, and typically went to women (Payne, 1991), which is a significant departure from the nature of 1950's work and society. The changes in society at this point were predicted by Naisbitt (1982) who stated that there would be an increased movement of women into roles outside of the home, that many organisations would decentralise such that the importance of the 'human touch'

would become paramount due to the transition from an industrial to an information age.

The 1980's saw the expansion of technology in the workplace, including computers, facsimile machines, and photocopiers and towards the end of the decade, mobile telephones in their original forms. At these early stages, it was apparent that the introduction of technology (along with the rise of the service sector) provided women with many specific advantages including the reduction of heavy manual work which required physical strength (Stanworth, 2000). Technological change significantly changed the nature of work, allowing for work to be taken out of the workplace and thereby permitting increasingly flexible working hours (Perrons, 2009). The development of online communications have a number of benefits specific to women as they are arguably more gender neutral and impersonal and can therefore be seen to reduce gender bias (Carr-Ruffino, 1993; and Stanworth, 2000). One consequence of the new technology is that many of today's workplaces are characterised by 'new ways of working'. This term, first defined by Karasek and Theorell (1990) included the use of home working, tele-working, working in the evening and use of video calls. A critical part of the 'new ways of working' is the concept of 'boundary-less working' (De Menezes and Kelliher, 2011), which is characterised as involving more spatial flexibility resulting from the internet. Similarly, there has been a rise in the concept of agile working, which perhaps assists with the managing of work and caregiving. Agile working involves working flexibly across both time and space, essentially a broader way of conceptualising the workplace that is underpinned by trust, involving employees working independently and being responsive to organisational needs in a flexible manner, with core aims taking precedence over more artificial targets

(Jeyasingham, 2016). Agile working is claimed to bring people, processes and technology together to find the most appropriate and effective way of working to carry out a particular task which is based on trust and innovation (Tims, 2010; and Jeasingham, 2016).

During the 1990's there was a series of government initiatives to assist employees to reconcile their family and employment responsibilities (Fagan, 2009), such as the Employment Rights Act (1996), which provided employees with the right to be absent from work if their child was sick. The expansion of childcare services under the government's 1998 National Childcare Strategy can be considered to be instrumental in enhancing childcare provision and thus female labour market participation (Perrons, 2009). However, it is relevant to note that the childcare provision in the UK at this time was considered to be far behind that of other European countries (Charles, 1993). Whilst it might have taken longer than European comparators, 79% of families in England with children aged 0 to 14 are reported to have used some form of childcare during their most recent term-time week (Department of Education, 2017).

The early 1990's also saw a further period of recession in the UK and as before, this brought with it changes to previous employment patterns with male unemployment rates overtaking female unemployment rates, demonstrating an increase in economic inactivity rates for men whilst women's activity increased (ONS, 2011, '*Impact of the recession*' report). Similar trends were observed during the global banking crisis of 2008 and the subsequent recession that followed (2008-2010) which saw a substantial rise in redundancy rates in general, with men being reported to be more

likely to be made redundant than women during recession (ONS, 2011, *'Impact of the recession'* report). The reasons for men being more likely to be made redundant centred around gendered occupational segregation (discussed further in chapter three), with men more likely to be working in recession affected industries, such as manufacturing, construction, transport and communication, whereas women were more likely to work in industries that were less affected such as education, and health (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2013) *Workplace Employment Relations Study- 2011*). As identified earlier in this chapter, recessions have had a key impact on the division of caregiving within the family, with out of work fathers often found to be taking on more caregiving responsibilities, sometimes the primary responsibility; this topic is returned to in chapter four.

The prevailing disparity regarding occupational segregation is surprising given the significant developments in the employment policy landscape with regard to the family and the workplace. One of the most significant of these was the introduction of The Equality Act (2010). Whilst the Equality Act (2010) did not make specific reference to the family, it made it illegal to discriminate on the grounds of gender in recruitment and redundancy and provided clarity surrounding maternity leave rights . Such legislation brings with it an expectation of a reduction in inequalities across the board, including gender, and may have had a part to play in the steady, albeit slow, reduction of the gender pay gap since 2010 (ONS,2018) . However, the Equality Act (2010) is not without critique. With issues surrounding awareness being commonplace soon after its introduction and low levels of engagement observed with the Equality Act and the practices that it advocates (Government Equalities Office, 2012, *'Evaluation of the Implementation of the Equality Act 2010:Report 2'*). According

to Dickens (2014), some elements of the act are largely abandoned in the workplace due to being considered to “*burdensome*” (p237). Beirne and Wilson (2016) continue that with regard to gender inequality the Equality Act (2010) can be considered to be a “*fudge or tame intervention*” (p226) which has produced “*few substantive gains*” (p227).

More specific to the family, The Employment Act (2002) and later the Children and Families Act (2014) made the right to request flexible working an employment right for all employees with 26 weeks continuous employment. However, according to recent research, usage of flexible working has plateaued since 2010 (CIPD, *Mega trends - Flexible Working*, 2019), and many routes to flexible working remain closed off to employees (Working Families, *Modern Families Index*, 2019). Such research implies that the legislation has not resulted in the societal change that perhaps was expected at its conception. Similarly, this pattern was observable for the introduction of shared parental leave (SPL) in 2015. Introduction of SPL can be seen as a key development for parents managing work and family life, specifically acknowledging the important role of fathers in caregiving, the implication being that such a move towards a greater equality in the level of participation in childcare would improve gender equality more generally (Escobedo and Lara Navarro-Varos, 2012).

SPL permits working parents to share statutory leave after the birth of a child, subsequently allowing parents to choose how to allocate leave between them and making it easier for both parents to combine caregiving and labour market participation. However, the uptake of SPL is low, with figures released from the Department of Business placing it at 2% (Department for Business, Energy and

Industrial Strategy and Andrew Griffiths MP, 2018, 'Share the joy' campaign). Such disparities in the take up of parental leave are also observable internationally with both France and Spain reporting low usage of parental leave by fathers and such fathers being classified as largely "*a typical*" (Escobedo and Lara Navarro-Varos, 2012; p43).

Many academics have sought to explore the rationale for the low take up of SPL with lack of clarity from the employers and employees has been proposed to be central to the low take up, as has the lack of enhancement on statutory SPL (Bannister and Kerrane, 2017). This is echoed by the Government Equalities Office report on '*Return to Work- Parental Decision Making*' (2018: 6-7) who state that parental decision making regarding combining work and childcare is governed by a number of factors. Firstly, financial factors, largely related to the lack of enhancement on statutory pay for SPL. Secondly, work related factors, with a lack of understanding and entitlements regarding SPL cited as a key factor to low take up. Thirdly, emotional factors are proposed to impact upon low take up and it was suggested that mothers often are associated with feelings of guilt when returning to work and there is an element of reluctance to 'give up' on something that was considered to be theirs with regard to parental leave. Fourthly, social factors, in which parents are affected by the expectations and behaviours of those around them, which is closely linked to the fifth factor of attitudes and the impact of such attitudes towards gender roles and behaviours. The last factor highlighted by this report was categorised as 'implicit decision making', implying that decision making with regard to parental working arrangements is undertaken without explicit consideration and made in a more implicit manner.



It is important to note at this juncture that according to some academics propose that parental leave will always be taken up at disproportionate rates by women rather than men which both deepens the inequities between men and women and increases the workplace discrimination against women (Ray, Gornick, Schmittt, 2010).

The low take up rates of SPL seems at odds with the apparent cultural shift in the role of father and whilst SPL is not a specific focus of this study it is expected that the outcomes of the study may offer some explanations for the low take up rate of SPL and to the adherence of a more traditional breadwinning working pattern for fathers.

The developments in legislative rights for fathers such as SPL can be considered a critical factor in facilitating the increase in female labour market participation (NCDS, 2008; and Eikhof, 2012) with female employment rates in the UK getting increasingly closer to that of men. According to the most recent available ONS data (2013) 67% of women aged 16 to 64 are now in work and 76% of men, which clearly shows the gap has narrowed compared to 1971 (53% / 92% respectively), highlighting a significant reduction in gendered participation rates in workplaces. The progressive policy think-tank, the Institute for Public Policy Research (2015) reported that of these working women, one third are now breadwinners for their families. However, it remains the case that after the age of 22, men (as a categorical grouping) have consistently higher employment rates than women and a key explanation offered for this is the impact of having a family upon women which appears to have a disproportionate effect (ONS,2013, *'Women in the Labour Market'* report).

The prevailing disparity and entrenched gender inequalities in the labour market have resulted in women's fortunes at work continuing to fall significantly short of those enjoyed by men (Eikhot, 2012). More recent findings by the ONS (2018, *'Understanding the gender pay gap in the UK'*) provide supporting evidence for the continuation of the gender pay gap, albeit a decreasing one, with men's full-time average earnings reported to be 9.1% higher than women. This gap can be explained in part by factors such as interrupting a paid career to raise children and returning to part-time employment after having children, which results in obtaining fewer pay rises and promotions (Dex, Ward and Joshi, 2008). This is supported by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2011) *'How Fair is Britain?'* report which proposes that whilst pay disparities can be largely attributed to the impact of having children, they are fueled by continuing differences in employment rates, occupational segregation and the levels of caring responsibility between men and women. Specifically, Rubery and Rafferty (2013) propose that identifying men as the 'core' workforce (full-time) and women as the 'periphery' (part-time) workforce is key to the maintenance of the gender pay gap. This concept is evidenced through the statistics in this area, as despite a potential change in the landscape and an increasing number of men working part-time (Wang, Parker and Taylor, 2013), women remain three times more likely to be in part-time employment than men (ONS, 2017, *'Families in the labour market'*). This supports existing research, which has observed that whilst in principle the policy environment has shifted from assumptions of a male breadwinner to dual earners, due to severe constraints on mothers' labour market participation, women continue to earn half the lifetime earnings of men (Warren, Fox and Pascall, 2009). It is too early to tell whether or not the recent UK legislation which now requires

employers with over 250 employees to publish gender pay gap data annually (The Equality Act, 2010-Gender Pay Gap Reporting Regulations, 2017) will have an impact.

This pattern is also observable internationally. A report for the United Nations (2011) entitled '*Men in Families and Family Policy in a Changing World*' proposes that breadwinning and adoption of 'providing' roles continue to be associated with fathers globally whilst caregiving remains with mothers. It appears that this is intertwined with the gender pay gap and uneven division of care work. Similarly, in Europe, women dominate the realms of part-time working whilst the male breadwinner model remains prominent, with the exception of Eastern Europe and Central Europe which appear to have less part-time working in a general sense (Berghammer, 2014; and European Commission, 2016). In the US, maternal labour market participation suggests a different pattern to that observed in the UK. With US mothers being found to work less hours than UK mothers and more UK mothers working in a dual earner capacity than those in the US (Lyonette, Kaufman and Crompton, 2011). As the existing literature regarding parents in the workplace is dominated by studies in the US, which appears to have a different labour market composition to the UK, a UK based study is anticipated to increase knowledge in this potentially important area.

### **Fathers, Work and Society**

As discussed, a direct result of structural shifts in the workforce has seen an increase in mothers in the workforce (Bergman and Hobson 2002; Dermott, 2005; and O'Brien,

2005). Whilst the homemaker mother and breadwinning father model still widely exists in the UK it is possible that this is no longer representative of many modern families in Western society (Probert, 2005; and Solomon, 2014). Many families have moved to a model of 'modern male breadwinning', which has been defined as a family within which both parents work, but the mother is in a part-time capacity whilst the father works full-time or the family unit is classed as 'dual breadwinning' where both parents work full-time (Berghammer, 2014). Certainly ONS data in 2017 indicates that 'modern male breadwinning' is a popular choice for contemporary UK families with 1.8 million couple families split employment so that the father works full-time whilst the mother works part-time (ONS, 2017 *'Families in the labour market'*).

It is proposed that the prominence of traditional gender roles and the cultural norms associated with them have reduced (Coltrane and Parke, 1998; Bergman and Hobson 2002; Dermott 2005; O'Brien, 2005; and Crompton and Lyonette, 2008) and in some cases there has been a complete rejection of traditional gender roles (Scott, 2006). It is suggested that society is moving to a "road less travelled" (Heppner and Heppner, 2009; 63) and participation in non-traditional gender roles, namely employment for women and childcare for men (Fischer and Anderson, 2012) is causing gender role attitudes to be in a transition (Pleck, 1979).

The social norm of a homemaker-mother and breadwinner-father is not the only pattern in decline as the traditional nuclear family model of two biological parents and children can also be seen to be diminishing (Bengtson, 2001), replaced by alternative family arrangements (Beck-Gernshiem, 2002). Statistics support this, where in 1958 95% of children were born to married parents compared to 56% of children born in

2006 (NCDS, 2008) and with 15% of children in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries living with one parent (OECD, 2011). This pattern is also observable internationally, for example, in the US 59% of two-parent households with children under 18 are dual-career earners (Harrington, Van Deusen and Fraone, 2013). Similarly, the number of families in the US with a stay at home mother and breadwinner father (see Glossary of Terms) has decreased from 45% in 1975 to 31% today, with single-parent households and dual-career couples being increasingly common (Harrington et al, 2013).

Many explanations are offered to explain the reduction in the traditional nuclear family such as an increase in divorce rates (ONS, 2011, *'Divorces in England and Wales'*), the rise of the dual breadwinning family (Allard, et al 2011), recently legitimised lifestyles such as civil partnerships and co-habitation and the trend for older first time parents (Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; and NCDS, 2008). Notwithstanding these variations of modern-day family structures, this research will focus on the 'nuclear family' of two biological resident parents through representing this family arrangement in the vignettes. By doing so in a UK environment, it presents an opportunity for comparisons to be made with similar (largely US based) research to explore any potential differences in the experience and perception of caregiving fathers in the UK compared to the US.

As was chronicled earlier in this chapter, many explanations are offered in the work and family literature to explain the evolution of the role of the modern day father, with women's educational and professional achievements, increasing labour market contribution and career aspirations all having their part to play. The UK in 2012 saw

the highest rates of stay at home fathers since records had begun whilst the number of women looking after children full-time was in decline, pointing to a change in the division of labour both in the home and the workplace (ONS, 2013, '*Women in the labour market*' report). It is argued that "traditional ideas have given way to more egalitarian viewpoints, which deem it appropriate for both men and women to pursue paid employment outside of the home and also share responsibilities within the home" (Budworth, Enns and Rowbotham, 2008; 104). Similarly, the majority of parents have been reported as no longer believing that childcare is a main responsibility of the mother and that fathers have the main responsibility for providing for the family ('Working Better: fathers, family and work contemporary perspectives', EHRC, 2009).

It has been suggested that modern fathers want to be involved in the care of their children to a larger extent than in previous times (Milkie, Bianchi, Mattingly, and Robinson, 2002), do not affiliate with the role of breadwinner and would be happy to stay at home to look after the children (Thompson, Brough and Schmidt, 2006). According to Pleck and Pleck (1997) modern fathers are seeking a co-parent model with both financial and family responsibilities beginning to become more shared. Such a view implies that fatherhood is becoming a popular masculine style, moving away from the rigid distinction of notions of active mothering and passive fathering (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2003). The contemporary role of the father is argued to be flexible, with a father expected to mediate effectively between family and employment using flexible working practices (Burnett, Gatrell, Cooper and Sparrow, 2013). However, the reality for many families still remains very traditional and a difference between rhetoric and reality is very evident.

It has been reported that women continue to spend more time on childcare than men, (Wang et al, 2013), and occupational choices of men continue to push them away from family responsibilities, (Allard et al, 2011) with breadwinning continuing to be central to the belief of what make a good father (Townsend, 2002; Bergman and Hobson, 2002; Pocock, 2005; Holter, 2007; and Wells and Sarkadi, 2011). Such ideologies can be seen to keep fathers in full-time roles whilst mothers dominate part-time roles, which is associated with the persistence of the gender pay gap. It is proposed that modern fathers feel constrained by the home (such as financial pressures) and organisational pressures (such as working longer hours), which can hinder any great transformation of their parenting behaviours (Norman and Elliott, 2015). Whilst policies such as SPL can be seen to assist fathers in the workplace, the development and implementation of specific policies to support fathers in their role as parents remain underdeveloped (*'Working Families' Top Employers Benchmark* Report, 2010). It is suggested that society routinely reinforces a mother's role as primary care giver, through policies such as child benefit being paid to the mother, which can be seen to create a challenge for fathers who wish to be actively involved in caregiving (Misra, Lundquist, Holmes and Agiomavritus, 2011).

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has explored the historical and political landscape of the nature of work, society and parenthood in the UK. Through plotting the transitions that have occurred,

explanations have been offered as to why work and society exists in the way it presents itself today.

The role of women both in the home and in the workplace has significantly shifted over the last 150 years, with male and female labour market participation being largely equal in modern society. The shift can be seen as a consequence of a number of factors which include a move away from manufacturing industry, the rise of the service industry, improved higher education for women, the effects of two world wars, recessions and developments in technology. The political landscape has also played its part, with the UK observing a wide array of legislation to improve equality and assist in the management of a home and work life. Whilst it has been established that there is an increased amount of equality in workforce participation, it has been proposed that both work and society continue to be shaped by expected gender norms of behaviour. With regard to the family, this largely dictates that mothers are the primary caregivers and this has implications on the experience and perception of both parents in the workplace. With regard to mothers, it can be seen to place women at an economic disadvantage and is linked to both occupational segregation and pay differentials. One of the most striking implications was identified in UK research by Manning and Petrongolo (2008) as the 'part-time pay penalty', which found that women on average earn 25% less than women in full-time work.

Either as a consequence or a cause of the changing role of women in the workplace and the home, the role of men has also altered over the last 150 years. The role of fathers was presented in this chapter as having changed historically from the early model of the father as a very present figure in the family, to that of 'distant



breadwinner' who worked away from the home and had minimal input into family life. The father of present day has been presented as a more 'involved father', who has a key role in the care and upbringing of the family, which can be likened, in part, to early models of fathering. However, the concept of a 'good father' remains for many families tied to economic contribution and underpinned by traditional gendered expectations of breadwinning behaviour. Such expectations can be observed to have a significant impact on caregiving fathers as in this climate it is apparent they might face a number of challenges when undertaking caregiving responsibilities.

The concept of parental gender roles will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter with the aim of understanding why, in a labour market where the sexes enter equally, the arrival of children herald a raft of different expectations of behaviour between women and men. These are important to explore in more depth, including their origins, manifestations and maintenance.

### **Chapter Three - Gender at Work**

Chapter two established the historical evolution of work and society, exploring the impact of legislative changes, world wars, and the rise in technology and service industries to create society as we know it in the UK in 2018. Chapter two demonstrated that as a consequence of many of these societal changes female labour force participation is at a peak and the gender pay gap is the lowest since records began (ONS, 2017, '*Families in the labour market*' report). The chapter also introduced the notion of gender disparity and suggested that parental treatment, schooling and biology had a part to play in the maintenance of the purported disparities. This chapter now turns to examine the issues faced by men and women in the workplace, exploring the complexities of entrenched inequalities and the impact of socially constructed gendered roles within society. This chapter commences by initially highlighting the importance of gender in the workplace, intimating that it is instrumental in partly predicting workplace behaviour and essentially a 'primary frame' for organising social relations (Ridgeway, 2009). The chapter then defines the terms gender and sex, proposing that sex can be considered to be a biological construct whereas gender is socially constructed and the challenges in being definitive with regard to gender and sex are identified. The chapter next turns its focus to exploring men and women in the light of feminism and masculinity theorists, specifically exploring the consequence of perceived alignment or rejection of feminine or masculine norms. The purpose of this exploration is to obtain a deeper understanding of gender at work, a discussion will be expanded upon with regard to fathers in the workplace in chapter four.

Central to this chapter is the exploration of the literature, which identifies the role that gender stereotyping plays in the workplace. The chapter explains the impact of gender stereotyping and the sex typing of certain job roles and the consequent occupational segregation, resulting in many roles being occupied largely by either men or women. The chapter concludes by synthesising the key aspects of the literature, which points to the implications of deviating from the gendered expectations of behaviour in the workplace.

It is important at the start of this chapter to establish the position of this research with regard to the issue of intersectionality, as it has been proposed to be a key theoretical contribution to this discourse (McCall, 2005). The chapter outlines that to assign gender to a single analytic category is challenging which can be seen to be underpinned by notions of intersectionality (McCall, 2005; and Rushing, 2017). Intersectionality has been defined as “the mutual reproduction of class, gender and racial relations of inequality” (Acker, 2006; 443), highlighting “the relationship among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations” (McCall, 2005; 1771) such that no single dimension of overall inequality sufficiently explains the full structure of multiple intersecting dimensions of inequality. It is acknowledged that intersectionality might have a part to play in the differing treatment of men and women at work, specifically parents at work and whilst this is not a specific focus of this study, if this appears to emerge in the data it will be addressed accordingly.

## **Gender at Work Matters**

The academic literature which explores the integral role that gender has to play in workplace experience is extensive. The workplace has been described as a “masculinity and femininity making device” (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2003; 147). Gender has been further described as the “organising principle” of the workplace, in which the boundaries between masculinity and femininity are established and maintained (Kerfoot and Knights, 1993; 660; and Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). The workplace can be considered to shape the behaviour of individuals through a system of social norms, organisational practices and structures (Sheridan, 2004). The workplace has been suggested to perpetuate unequal power, rewards and opportunities, through policies and procedures and interpersonal interactions which confirm and recreate gendered patterns of employment (Connell, 1987; and Acker, 1998), essentially a “site of gender inequality” (Besen, 2007; 256). Thus, research exploring workplace experiences, such as this present study, is necessary to establish if contemporary UK workplaces are reflective of these somewhat dated gendered workplace practices.

Men and women in the workplace can be observed to be held to different standards, for example, emphasis has been found to be placed on the importance of values such as courage, autonomy, mastery, technological skill, adventure and toughness for men, in a way that they are not for women (Sexton cited in Donaldson, 1993). Berdahl and Moon (2013) state that men have been found to be evaluated according to their professional dedication and competence, with such judgement of competence

resulting in respect. This is viewed as consequently the main determinant of social approval and treatment for working men. Conversely, women have been found to be evaluated according to their personal warmth, with those that display warmth face social approval and treatment for women can be seen to be underpinned by whether they are liked or not (Berdahl and Moon, 2013, citing Bem, 1974; Spence and Helmreich, 1978; Townsend, 2002; and Fiske, Cuddy, Glick and Xu, 2002) (this will be referred to in more depth in chapter four).

## **Gender as a Social Construct**

It is essential to adequately define the term 'gender' before embarking on a detailed discussion of the role of gender in the workplace, and make the distinction between the terms 'gender' and 'sex'. The distinction between sex and gender was recognised in the 1960s in feminist and other critical accounts of women's and men's positions in society (Broadbridge and Hearn, 2008). Gender is considered to be a primary frame for organising social relations (Ridgeway, 2009), a shared way of categorising each other into established roles to allow for predictions of the behaviour of others, allowing for co-ordination of individual behaviour and judgements to be made about people (Brewer and Lui 1989; and Fiske 1998). This categorisation is often dependent on cultural beliefs and gender stereotypes, with shared cultural beliefs providing rules for understanding behaviour (Ridgeway and Correll, 2004).

Sex, by contrast, is considered to be a biological construct (Abbas and Khattak, 2013) that "denotes physiological make up and reproductive status" (Broadbridge and

Simpson, 2011; 470), with babies registered into a binary category, male or female. This binary categorisation from the observable biological traits leads to assignment of sex (Richards, Bouman, Seal, Barker, Nieder and T'sjoen, 2016) and categorisation, which has recently received extensive media coverage. The media coverage of binary categorisations has varied from being favourable in the online and youth media to being more of 'interest' in the mainstream media (Richards et al, 2016). It has been proposed that whilst the majority of individuals do still identify their gender in line with the binary definitions as men or as women, gender identities outside of this are increasingly being recognised in legal, medical and psychological systems (Richards et al, 2016). This is evident in the recent identification of the terms used to define sex or gender in the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) 'Gender Identification Terminology Guide' (2017), which contained twelve definitions of sex or gender. Notwithstanding the importance of acknowledging the differences in classifications of gender, this study is focusing on the binary definition of sex as male or female, mother or father, and gender is presented as a social construct.

The term 'gender' can be considered to be a mechanism for exploration of socially constructed identities arising from actual physical difference (Connell, 1987; and Scott and Alwin, 1989) and is itself a product of cultural meanings, practices (West and Zimmerman, 1987), social institutions (which are variable, never fixed and continually changing (Acker, 1990), and linked to the social climate (Barnett and Hyde, 2001). Social constructionists challenge the notion of an objective reality and propose that what it means to be a man or a woman goes beyond biology (Hassard, Holliday and Willmott, 2000; Fuller, 2007; Rose, 2013; Ingold and Palsson, 2013; and

Meloni, 2014) with gender practice theory proposed to underpin the manifestation of gender.

Gender Practice Theory (GPT) informs our understanding of gender (Martin, 2003; Brickell, 2005, 2006; and Hancock and Tyler, 2007) and proposes that gender is framed by the action people take, through practices such as accepted behaviour, language, expression, actions and interests which are culturally agreeable and normally align to be gender specific (Martin, 2003; 2006). For example, if a young boy wants to wear a dress, then according to GPT, how those around him respond to this choice will have an implication on how he views himself as a boy, and if this is acceptable behaviour for a boy. It is not the boy or the dress that is the factor but the response to it. GPT transforms the way we look at gender from something 'we are' and a concept of 'being' (such as 'I am a man') to that of 'doing' (Mathieu, 2009), building on the work of West and Zimmerman (1987) and their concept of 'doing gender'. The 'doing gender' approach proposes that gender occurs actively through the performance of stereotypically gendered behaviours and therefore, only exists insofar as it is performed. This approach sees gender roles as something that is not pre-established but that is created and reinforced in different situations (Butler, 1990). Applied to a workplace setting, social construction of gender can be seen to occur for both sexes, which directly impacts on the workplace experience of men and women (Martin, 2003, 2006). To undertake a meaningful discussion of the differences between men and women in the workplace it is necessary to consult the men and masculinities discourses which potentially offers valuable insights into professed differentials.

## **Men and Masculinities in the Workplace**

It is important to establish the meaning of the word 'masculinity' at the outset. This in itself is complex as definitions are both ambiguous and often contradictory (Simpson, 2004). In its most simplistic form, being masculine is described as being not-female. Masculinity is associated with displays of detachment and independence, with men who demonstrate qualities associated with femininity (such as expressions of feelings) risking being considered to be behaving inappropriately (Bird, 1996). Masculinity and femininity have been described as relational concepts, with the meaning of one established in relation to the other, a cultural opposition (Connell, 1995). Masculinity and femininity can be considered to be an output of the framing of gender, something that people do and say in interaction when they distinguish between women and men (Van den Brink and Benschop, 2012).

Masculinities are believed to be created, performed and negotiated within a complex set of social and cultural relations, which includes but are not limited to the workplace, government policy, the family and schools (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2003; and Simpson, 2004). In the workplace, protection of masculine identities has been established as a key priority for some men despite encountering challenges with regard to societal expectations, unemployment and equal opportunity initiatives (Collinson and Hearn, 1994). The term masculinity is considered to comprise many different masculinities (Connell, 1995; and Beynon, 2002) and proposed to be continually shifting, fluid and precarious, with "what it means to be a man" remaining vague (Kerfoot and Knights, 1996; 85; and Vrtis, 2016).



The dominant cultural ideal of masculinity is identified to be hegemonic masculinity (Brandth and Kvande, 1998) and believed to have had a considerable impact on research in this area (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity is defined as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men” (Connell, 1995; 77). It provides a framework for the identification of the “ideal or actual characteristics of being a man” (Collier, 1998; 21), with many men striving to demonstrate their hegemonic masculinity (McDowell, 2015) in an attempt to be considered as a representative of “what it means to be a ‘real’ man (Dalley-Trim, 2007; 201). When applied to the family setting the hegemonic ‘ideal’ places fathers in the position of breadwinner and this association is believed to be intrinsically linked to perceptions of being a ‘real man’ (Solomon, 2014) something that will be returned to in chapter four.

It is assumed that ‘men will be men’ and do ‘men things’ and the notion of ‘doing masculinity’ is the day to day activity of men's lives, re-enacted and thus repeatedly maintaining the social norms of behaviour (West and Zimmerman, 1987). It is proposed by McPherson, McPherson, Forestell and Morgan (2003) that this can be explained through ‘homophily’, a concept that we align ourselves to things that are the same and for the purpose of this debate, with colleagues who are the same, forming friendships more easily if there is a similarity. This similarity has been defined as a “*boys club*” which involves a shared discourse and practices that institutionalises men’s dominance over women in a covert apparently innocuous way (Bird, 1996; and Fisher and Kinsey, 2014; 44). As this study is exploring the workplace experiences

and perceptions of caregiving fathers, it will be interesting to establish if such fathers face any challenges with their relationships with other men in the workplace, especially if they are in a minority, and if this has any implications on the choice they make regarding working arrangements.

The transmission of the norms of hegemonic masculinity have been proposed to be maintained and transmitted through male homosociability (Gregory, 2009), which can be formal or informal communication to repeatedly confirm masculinity (Knights and Tullberg, 2011) and regulate the behaviour of men (Connell, 2005). Through homosociability, other men take on the role of gatekeeper, consistently scrutinizing each other for signs of femininity and homosexuality (Simpson, 2004), starting from as early as school boys teasing each other for 'sissiness' (Kimmel and Mahler, 2003). It is complex to define exactly what hegemonic masculinity looks like in practice, ranging from men's engaging in toxic practices (Wetherell and Edley, 1999) to 'banter', with new group members being teased and tested to see whether they are 'man enough' to be accepted (Collinson and Hearn, 1994) and existing colleagues criticised to illustrate the superiority of the perpetrator (Nixon, 2003 cited in Gregory, 2009). The 'banter' can range from 'friendly sparring' (Gregory, 2009) to explicitly misogynistic, where lesser men' become defined as 'big-girls' and 'pansies' (Kerfoot and Knights, 1993; 4), aptly described as "humorous yet insulting, playful yet degrading" (Collinson and Hearn 1994; 9). The academic literature with regard to the issue of mockery will be examined in more depth in chapter four. This study will explore the concept of mockery through investigating the workplace experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers, exploring if mockery or fear of mockery emerges

as a factor that potentially impacts upon the maintenance of breadwinning models of paternal working arrangements.

Thus far this chapter has explored the importance of gender in the workplace, outlining the challenges in identification of gender and its seemingly socially constructed nature. The role of masculinity has been identified as central to the maintenance of a gendered status quo in the workplace, however, to discuss masculine discourse without exploring feminist discourse would render any discussions incomplete, and so this chapter now turns to discuss the role that feminist theory plays in understanding gender at work, which has arguably been central to raising the profile of masculinity and “putting masculinity on the gender map” (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2003:147).

### **Women and Feminist Theory at Work**

As outlined in chapter two, feminist discourse gained momentum during the two World Wars when women could be observed to embark on roles previously undertaken by men and aspirations to work outside of the home became more common for mothers. Feminist theorists have been integral in explaining gender segregation and gender inequalities (Greene and Kirton, 2015) and can be observed to have created physical changes in social practices, such as legislation and the increasing participation in the labour market with equal rights and privileges (Dick and Nadin, 2006).

Feminism can also be observed to have challenged the more traditional patriarchal discourse (Friedland and Alford, 1991) defined as “a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (Walby, 1990; 20) and “keep women in their place” (Dick and Nadin, 2006; 483). Patriarchal structures and attitudes within society distinguish between the female as the ‘home-maker’ and the male as the ‘breadwinner’, thus enforcing a view of childcare and housework/household labour as the chief responsibility of women (Greene and Kirton, 2015). This might explain why women typically continue to carry the double burden of childcare and unpaid domestic work even when they work outside of the home (Broadbridge and Hearn, 2008). Work in the home has been traditionally considered to be valued less than work in organisations which is often construed as essentially valuing men’s work over women’s (Gardiner, 2005; Grimshaw and Rubery, 2007; and Broadbridge and Hearn, 2008). This unequal division of household labour between the sexes along with patriarchal societal structures may offer a potential explanation for the prevailing gender pay gap in the UK. This phenomena has been identified as a “patriarchal dividend” (Greig, Kimmel and Lang 2000; 7) and can be viewed as a way of maintaining economic advantage over women, placing men who are employed full-time in a dominant position in society (Connell, 1987). It is appropriate at this juncture to highlight that not all men receive such a ‘patriarchal dividend’, particularly those who have no economic advantage at all over the women in their communities, if for example, they are unemployed (Connell, 1995). Similarly, Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2003), argue that men are under increasing threat within a rapidly changing society and the differing expectations of them regarding involvement in family life resulting in them being

described as 'gender victims'. Potentially, this concept of men being 'gender victims' might apply to caregiving fathers and this will be explored in this study.

Associated with masculinity and femininity are a number of traits which are proposed to disproportionately impact on women. Traits that are associated with femininity are treated as the cause of low achievement, while male traits are used to explain male success, with much research paying little attention to the positive value of feminine characteristics such as sociability and cooperation (Gaskell, 1992). Women have been identified as expected to have traits of nurturing, being deferential, affiliative, and passive, whereas men are identified as being autonomous, aggressive, dominant, and achievement oriented. Due to this it has been observed that women can find it particularly difficult to both obtain roles and succeed in them (Eagly and Karau, 2002; and Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, Ristikari, 2011) as organisational cultures have been found to promote masculine values, and can be observed to deter women from perceiving themselves, and being perceived, as fitting in (Dick and Nadin, 2006). This permeates throughout reward and job evaluation systems in organisations (Maier, 1999) and can result in workplace discrimination and inequality (Correll et al, 2007; and Heilman and Eagly, 2008). This also affects how women upwardly progress in their careers, as they have been observed to face a "social glass ceiling" or "hurdle" due to these social and cultural challenges (Ching-Yin Yim and Bond, 2002; 364; and Bond, Thompson, Galinsky and Prottas, 2003) and those women who do obtain senior positions have been found to be scrutinized to a greater degree than men (Eagly and Karau, 2002; Ryan and Haslam, 2005; Eagly and Carli, 2007; and Warning and Buchanan, 2009). Fundamental to the notion of traits is the concept of gender stereotyping which feminist theories suggest is an outcome of

organizational power relations, social, economic and ideological forces (Greene and Kirton, 2015). Gender stereotyping is proposed to be central to the adherence to traditional gender roles, which is purported to create complications for both sexes when they attempt to move away from gender expectations that are often entrenched from childhood.

### **Gender Stereotyping and Social Role Theory**

Gender stereotyping can be considered to have a key role to play in workplace experiences through dictating behavioural norms, specifying both the “shoulds” and the “should nots” of workplace behaviour (Heilman, 2001; Eagly and Karau, 2002; Heilman and Parks-Stamm, 2007; and Heilman and Wallen, 2010; 664). Gender stereotypes have been described as our beliefs about how the majority view the typical man or woman (Fiske 1998; Eagly and Karau 2002; and Fiske et al. 2002). Naturally, this assumption presumes the existence of ‘one way’ that ‘most people’ behave, implying that any deviation from this makes that person somewhat different from ‘most people’, which is a core issue in this research, placing caregiving fathers in this category.

Eagly (1987) proposed that Social Role Theory (SRT) is a valuable way of exploring the role of gender stereotypes in explaining the behavioural differences that exist between men and women. SRT proposes that certain traits are associated with women or men, which results in behavioural expectations of both sexes that are reinforced through various processes. Anker (1997) produced a list of ‘feminine’

characteristics often required for 'women's jobs' which included characteristics such as a caring nature, disinclination to supervise, less physical strength and greater tolerance of repetitive work, which can be considered to be influential in nature of 'female' occupations. Such gender role stereotypes can be seen to hamper women in masculine-type occupations and have a part to play in occupational stereotyping, which is closely intertwined with pay inequalities and more stringent, less objective performance on likelihood of advancement within the company (Eagly and Koenig, 2008). In relation to the family, Wood and Eagly (2002) proposed that there is an expectation of men to be the financial provider and women to be the caregiver of children.

Sociologists Heilman and Wallen (2010) observed that women are expected to be socially sensitive and service-oriented (communal), and not to engage in the assertive, achievement-oriented (agentic) behaviours associated with men. Similarly, men are associated with being independent, competitive, logical, rational, exploitative, strategic and breadwinning, whereas the stereotypes regarding women focus on being nurturing, co-operative, intuitive, emotional, empathic, spontaneous, homemaking (Sheridan, 2004). It is proposed by Eagly and Steffen (1984) and later Koenig et al (2011) that these stereotypes are born out of both sexes historically undertaking those roles, with men having a work orientation and women a family orientation. However, Güngör and Biernat, (2009) propose that it is more a case of men and women generally occupying these roles that creates the stereotypes. Thus, if women and men are known to occupy the same role, gender stereotypes should no longer apply. The data in this research will explore this point in depth, identifying the relationship between caregiving fathers and gender stereotyping, specifically to

explore if occupying the role of caregiving results in reduced gender stereotyping or if the stereotypes are too embedded which may explain the dominance of fathers in working patterns that align with breadwinning.

## **Sex Typing and Occupational Segregation**

One of the many consequences of gender stereotyping in the workplace can be considered to be the sex typing of jobs which can be seen as a mechanism for describing how some occupations are associated with certain sex and that only this coupling will be considered to be 'normal' and 'natural' (Collinson, Knights and Collinson, 1990). According to the conceptualisations of sex typing, men and women specialise in particular types of formal and informal labour dependant on their sex, which is divided across both the organisation and management structures (Broadbridge and Hearn, 2008, citing Legge, 1987). Theorists of sex typing propose that due to stereotypical gender 'traits', one gender is considered to not have the skills needed to perform the role of the other (Padavic and Reskin, 2002) with many professions categorised as appropriate or suitable for a certain gender (Padavic and Reskin, 2002; Holmes, 2006; and Kelan, 2010). Whilst it is important to acknowledge that there has been an increasing emphasis in the reduction of occupational sex typing (Nilsson and Sätterlund Larsson, 2005; Holmes and Schnurr, 2006; and Angouri, 2011) it still prevails and remains characteristic of most labour markets, including the UK (Padavic and Reskin, 2002; Holmes, 2006; Rubery and Rafferty, 2013; and McDowell, 2015).



Sex typing in the employment relationship can be considered to emerge early, before the employment relationship has begun with potential applicants rejecting career paths on the basis of stereotypically masculine or feminine cues, and this has been particularly prevalent with regard to women's interest in science, maths and computer science (Murphy, Steele, and Gross, 2007; and Cheryan, Plaut, Davies and Steele, 2009). Women have been found to be more likely to self-select into less prestigious and lower paying careers than men (Nadler and Stockdale, 2012 citing Konrad, 2003; ONS, 2017, '*Families in the labour market*' report) and continue to be attracted to occupations that can be defined as 'women's work', such as clerical, secretarial and personal service work (with Dick and Nadin, 2006, citing Scott, 1994). It has been observed that despite slightly superior qualifications women tend to enter into more junior roles than men, for example, many women start their career as a secretary but men rarely do (Colgan and Tomlinson, 1996; New Policy Institute, 2016; CIPD, 2016).

Feminised workplaces have been observed to be characterized by the stereotypical features of femininity such as caring, supportive, person orientated often involving 'front-line' activities (such as cleaning) whilst the comparatively more 'central' activities (such as engineering) are often performed by men (Broadbridge and Hearn, 2008). Some of the strongest impact regarding occupational sex typing can be observed with regard to the assumed more masculine occupations (Eagly and Koenig, 2008) in which women are believed to be less likely to be successful in the role due to deep rooted beliefs grounded in gendered stereotypes (Collinson, 1988). The literature in this area is indicative that in general terms, masculine gender roles are more strongly associated with career success, high authority roles and managerial characteristics than feminine gender roles (Schein, 1973, 1975;

Motowidlo, 1982; Schein, Mueller, Lituchy, and Liu, 1996; Rudman and Kilianski, 2000; Kirchmeyer, 2002; and Schneidhofer, Schiffinger and Mayrhofer, 2010), with such jobs being associated with a higher starting salary (Haefner, 1977). It is proposed by Hakim's preference theory (1991; 1998; 2000) that in many countries women now have genuine choices about how to balance paid work and family life however the majority of women choose a 'homemaker' career and see paid work as of peripheral importance in their lives. Hakim proposes that gender segregation ultimately derives from women's work orientations and life priorities. Hakim goes as far as to state: "most women have actively colluded in their own imprisonment in unpaid work in the home and low-paid, low status jobs in the workforce" (1991; 110). However, how much of this is choice and how much is due to social conditioning is debateable. Leahy and Doughney (2006) comments that Hakim's approach is significantly flawed and is unable to explain women's 'adaptive preferences', which they describe as the preferences that women display which are based on available choices in direct response to gendered inequalities rather than as preferred options. This will be interesting to explore in the empirical part of this study, for example, is the maintenance of the breadwinning model due to the choice made by parents or is it a consequence of inequalities in society between parents?

The concept of 'prescriptive gender bias' can be considered central to the discussion of the sex typing of jobs and occupational segregation as it proposes that judgements are made about a person on the basis of how they should or should not act according to their gender (Luzadis et al, 2008; and Eagly and Karau, 2002). It advocates that people expect to be perceived and evaluated differently dependent on whether their actions violate expectations of how they should act (descriptive stereotypes) or

expectations of what behaviours are required (prescriptive stereotypes). Researchers have observed that sex typing can occur early in the employment relationship and often job criteria at the selection stage can be seen to be reflective of the selector's gendered assumptions of suitability (Webb and Liff, 1988). Research has found that in the event of minimal difference between applicants, it is likely that a less qualified applicant who is aligned to the sex typing of the job would be hired (Atwater and Van Fleet, 1997). Some have gone further than this and stated that interviewers regularly prefer applicants whose gender is aligned to the occupational sex typing and explain that this is due to reconciling their pre-existing internal heuristics regarding the traits and behaviours of the 'ideal applicant' for that job, and this is particularly true when gender is intrinsically intertwined with the ideal applicant prototype (Glick, Zion, and Nelson, 1988; Graves, 1993; Perry, 1994; and Noon, 2012). This effect has been observed over many conditions with both men and women facing challenges when they 'buck the trend' with regard to the sex typing of a job. It has been found that men who exhibit traditional gender role behaviours are more likely to be successful in selection (Eagly and Carli, 2007) and more likely to be hired than women into senior roles. Whereas if women are hired they are more likely to be paid less, promoted less often and given less authority, (Glick, et al, 1988; Kobrynowicz and Biernat, 1997; Rudman and Glick, 1999; and Eagly and Karau, 2002). Male applicants have also been found to be discriminated against for jobs that are considered feminine or 'female work' (Kalin and Hodgins, 1984; Glick et al, 1988; and Atwater and Van Fleet, 1997). In this circumstance, men can also be negatively affected due to what is described as the 'women-are-wonderful effect' (Eagly and Mladinic, 1989; and Langford and MacKinnon, 2000).

It is also pertinent for this study to consider how the experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers align to notions of 'masculine characteristics' and the potential part this may play in continuation of breadwinning norms. It has been suggested in some parts of the gender literature that one of the outcomes of rejecting more traditional gender norms is a conceptualisation that the behaviour will be viewed as somewhat deviant.

## **Deviance, Gender and Men**

The final part of this chapter explores the evidence relating to responses to deviations from gendered norms. This discussion underpins a more in depth exploration in the final literature review chapter of the research which pertains to the experience of caregiving fathers who are positioned as challenging stereotypical parental gender norms.

Both men and women in gender-inconsistent roles have been found to face social and economic penalties, and these 'backlash effects' (Rudman and Phelan, 2008) can result in some individuals being 'marked', seen as deviant and in some way separate from the mainstream (Baxter, 2010; and Ku, 2011). Berdahl and Moon (2013:346) describe such individuals as "gender deviants" and propose such individuals consequently face significantly higher levels of workplace mistreatment than "gender conformers" (Berdahl et al, 1996; Gruber, 1998; Waldo et al., 1998; Berdahl, 2007; 346. According role congruity theory as introduced earlier in this chapter, deviations from roles that can be viewed as aligned prescriptive stereotypes

are more likely to result in negative evaluation than someone who is more gender consistent (Luzadis et al, 2008; and Eagly and Karau, 2002). This affect is observable for both sexes, with men and women being found to receive negative reactions when behaving in a way that is inconsistent with gendered stereotypes (Flynn and Ames, 2006; Heilman and Wallen, 2010; Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham, and Handelsman, 2012). However, the nature of the penalties have been found to vary (Heilman and Wallen, 2010).

Women in male dominated roles have been found to be perceived as cold, manipulative, abrasive, pushy and selfish and more generally disliked (Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs and Tamkins, 2004; and Heilman and Okimoto, 2007). Whereas women in female dominated roles can expect a more positive response in the workplace and not experience the backlash that their counterparts in male dominated roles can expect (Flynn and Ames, 2006; Heilman and Chen, 2005; and Rudman and Phelan, 2008). Berdahl and Moon (2013) are more specific and suggest that women in gender atypical occupations (such as mechanics) are significantly more likely to be sexually harassed at work than individuals working in an occupation considered to be more typical for their gender (such as catering).

For men, whilst a negative response and penalisation have also been observed when they are perceived to be acting in a non-stereotypical manner (Rudman and Fairchild, 2004; and Moss-Racusin, et al, 2012) the negative judgements focus around being viewed as ineffectual and afforded less respect than individuals in a gender-consistent position (Heilman and Wallen, 2010; and McDowell, 2015). However, it

has been observed that men who were considered to be acting in a feminine way in a feminine environment are often accepted, such as male nurses who have been found to “orient to norms” (Holmes and Schnurr, 2006; 2). This finding is particularly pertinent to this study, as it is proposed that caregiving fathers are considered to be navigating within a ‘feminine environment’. It will be interesting to explore whether caregiving fathers alter their behaviours within the workplace to obtain greater acceptance and the part this plays, if any, on the maintenance of breadwinning norms.

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has explored many of the potential explanations for the prevailing disparity between men and women in the workplace, despite the many changes regarding female labour market participation and equal pay that was charted in chapter two. The importance of scrutinising the issue of gender in the workplace has been discussed and the challenges of doing this due to conceptualisations of masculinity and femininity and aligned expectations are outlined.

Workplace experiences have been established as being underpinned by a multiplicity of stereotypes and expected norms of behaviour on the basis of gender, which can impact on occupational choice, workplace decision-making and workplace treatment. Workplace mistreatment was introduced as a potential consequence for those who do not behave in a way that is aligned to their gendered stereotype, which manifests itself in numerous ways, such as being considered to be deviant, face negative judgements, being less likely to obtain a role or be accepted in that role.

What has yet to be adequately explored is how these aspects impact on parents in the workplace and specific for this study, on fathers. Chapter four will undertake this investigation into the literature pertaining to the workplace experiences of parents, with a view to establishing the areas of focus for the empirical part of this study.

## **Chapter Four - Fathers in the Workplace**

Thus far, the study has explored societal expectations of parents and the subsequent changes surrounding parental roles. Earlier discussions in chapters two and three identified the pivotal role of gender in establishing the roles undertaken by men and women in both the workplace and the home. Chapter three turned attention to the workplace specifically and explored potential explanations for the purported differentials in expectations of men and women, which was underpinned by conceptualisations of masculinity, femininity and gender stereotyping. This final literature chapter develops these earlier themes and theories by involving a critical exploration of the experience of parents in the workplace, with the purpose of understanding the nature of working families and the challenges faced by working parents, with emphasis placed on caregiving fathers. This chapter explores the academic terrain, which outlines the experience of parents in the workplace, specifically to examine if differences exist between the experiences of mothers and fathers. Emphasis will be placed on the experience of caregiving fathers in the workplace to underpin the empirical part of the study, exploring how fathers reconcile the purported changes in expectations of them as fathers and historical expectations of them as men.

It has been suggested within this review thus far that both men and women in western society can be seen to be moving away from traditional gender norms and ideologies of femininity and masculinity. Within this climate it is suggested that parents are required to manoeuvre within strongly held social norms regarding what is constituted



to be the socially acceptable approach to combining employment and parenting, navigating motivational factors and household economics (Duncan, 2006; Garcia-Retamero, and López-Zafra, 2006). The gendered differentials in workplace treatment explored in the previous chapter are arguably pushed to the forefront with regards to the family, with inflexibility regarding parental gender roles observable (Fischer and Anderson, 2012). Decisions regarding parental gender roles have been presented as existing on a spectrum, ranging from egalitarian views with equal division of career opportunities and shared involvement in the parenting, to traditional beliefs regarding gender roles with emphasis placed on fulfilling one role, either homemaker or breadwinner, but not both (Budworth, Enns and Rowbotham, 2008).

In order to fully understand the experience of fathers in the workplace this chapter will explore the workplace responses to families who maintain the suggested status quo where the mother in the family has a primary association with the family and the father with the workplace as opposed to more modern families with dual breadwinning or female breadwinning arrangements.

For the purposes of this study, a caregiving father is considered to spend both time on their own with the child without another parent present, and be involved with specific child care activities (Raley, Bianchi and Wang, 2012). These activities are considered to be basic caregiving activities that parents provide to ensure a child's physical well-being (such as feeding or dressing), recreational activities (such as playing) and managerial activities (such as arranging child care services or picking up and dropping off children). This aligns closely to Cohen-Bendahan's (2015) definition of 'caregiving parents' as those who are involved in explicit care which

incorporates direct care (such as changing nappies), indirect care (such as purchasing child's clothes) and play (such as reading stories).

It is acknowledged throughout this study that the scope of this study is narrow, focusing on cohabiting heterosexual parents and this chapter will focus on this family structure, whilst acknowledging that a wide array of other family structures exist. Similarly, as with chapter three, it is recognised that in line with notions of intersectionality, many factors might have an impact on the workplace perceptions and experience of fathers, for example, social class, ethnic origin, age, all might have an implication on the differentials in experiences for parents. However, whilst acknowledged, this is not a focus of this literature review or indeed this study. The rationale for this is a belief that an in-depth exploration of the perceptions and experiences of caregiving fathers would be hindered by a broader and therefore briefer exploration of all potential contributory factors.

### **Traditional Parental Gender Roles in the Workplace**

Whilst this study is primarily focused on the shifting expectations of fathers, an authentic discussion of fathers cannot take place out of context. Therefore, it is necessary to first explore the background surrounding traditional parenting gender role ideologies which place the father in the role of breadwinner, with fathers primarily located in the workplace (Townsend, 2002; Coltrane, 2004; Warren 2007; Braun, Vincent and Ball, 2011; and Podnieks, 2016) and the mother as caregiver (Eagly, 1987; Eagly et al, 2000; Duncan 2006; and Scott and Clery, 2013).

Traditional gender role ideologies espouse that work and family decisions are governed by *the “motherhood mandate”* which dictates that a ‘good mother’ must be physically present and available to meet her child’s every need (Russo, 1976; 7). According to this ideology, it is the women of the family who should aspire to raise children and be willing to forego a career advancement in favour of parenthood (Gorman and Fritzsche, 2002; Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, and Burnaford and Weaver, 2008) and thus expected to prioritise children above work commitments (Correll, Benard, and Paik, 2007). It is proposed that a mother’s decisions with regard to work outside of the home are intertwined with expectations of presence and involvement in childrearing and the exhibition of parenting behaviours (Duncan, 2006). This can be explained by the notion of ‘intensive mothering’, which advocates that mothers should spend a considerable amount of their time caring for children and are the ideal caregivers for children (Raley, Bianchi and Wang, 2012, citing Hays 1996). Mothers have been observed to undertake the majority of domestic labour alongside an increasing amount of paid work, whilst men’s paid and domestic labour remains static (Harkness, 2008; Altintas and Sullivan, 2016; ONS, 2017, ‘*Families in the labour market*’ report). Perrons (2009) proposed that this inequity is key to the prevailing gender pay gap within the labour market. This supports the research of Scott (2006; 4) who states that whilst women have made substantial inroads into the labour market and into combining work and family life, there is no “great optimism” that men are responding to this by increasing their involvement in childcare and household labour.

A potential explanation for this is offered by Kan, Sullivan and Gershuny (2011) who state that the contemporary dominant model of the family involves most women being employed but still expected to fulfil the major domestic caring role and even for men

who do participate it is in more of a supporting, 'helping' capacity rather than taking ownership (Coltrane, 1996). The literature in this area commonly links motherhood to presence in the home, whereas, for fathers, the expectations appear to differ with conceptions of 'good fathering' being based on different criteria and reduced expectation of involvement in the home (Kobryniewicz and Biernat, 1997; Halford, Savage and Witz, 1997; and Haas and Hwang, 2015). With the higher salaries of men resulting in a higher amount of power in the home and reduced amounts of domestic labour (Sullivan, 2004; Edwards and Wajcman, 2005; Craig, 2006; and Hook, 2006).

Perceptions of 'good fathering' have been observed to be intertwined with financial contributions to the household and being a good provider (Silverstein, Conroy, Wang, Giarrusso and Bengtson, 2002; Coltrane, 2004; Warren 2007; and Braun et al, 2011). Undertaking the role of provider has been considered to be an "integral part of what fathers do" (Garey, 1999; 6) and fathers who conform can be seen to reap a number of benefits, which can be likened to the benefits reaped by those who conform to gender stereotypes in chapter three. The rewards for such conformity include being viewed as demonstrating 'good citizenship' (Dermott, 2005), considered to be successful (Gould, 1974; Arrighi and Maume, 2000) and ultimately experiencing feelings of 'social inclusion' (Lewis, 2001). This might in part explain why fathers have been found to be less compromised than mothers when making the decision between providing for the family and spending time with them (Horna and Lupri, 1987) as the workplace is expected to be prioritised and attention paid to their families comes second to the workplace (Halford, et al, 1997; Daly and Palkovitz, 2004; and Gatrell and Cooper, 2008).

As established previously, in the UK there has been a clear increase over time in mothers working outside of the home, however, in most households the father remains the primary earner (ONS, 2017, *'Families in the labour market'* report), a model that has been found to be preferred by many mothers and children (Warin, Solomon, Lewis and Langford, 1999; Scott and Cleary, 2013; and Connolly, et al, 2016). Adhering to a model described as 'parsonian' by Gatrell (2005; 473) in which heterosexual couples operate with fathers as lead earners and mothers a lead child carers. This arrangement is central to the maintenance of the hegemonic ideal, identified in chapter three which dictates that perceptions of being a 'good father' are intertwined with work outside of the domestic sphere and being the primary income provider (Locke, Vrtis, cited in Podnieks, 2016). Taking economic responsibility through breadwinning (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2003) and working for pay is demonstrative of adherence to the traditional norms of masculinity and the behaviour of 'real' men (Solomon, 2014). With fathers continuing to be linked to breadwinning and 'little else' (Lewis, 2000), assuming limited caregiving responsibilities (Haas and Hwang, 2015). This is illustrated by the rarity of usage of the term 'working father', compared to the wide usage of the phrase 'working mother' (Garey, 1999; and Ranson, 2011). It has been proposed by researchers that in order to preserve perceptions of masculinity, lack of involvement in the home is not sufficient and fathers need to actually "assert their masculinity through domestic refusal and active disassociation from this sphere" (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2003; 33) as any engagement in so called female-work might challenge their masculinity (Brandth and Kvande, 1998).

Media, including social media, newspapers and broadcast media has a key role to play in the transmission of traditional parenting norms, with fathers regularly portrayed as having a primary commitment to the workplace and mothers depicted as the 'main parent' (Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin, 1999; Ridgeway and Correll 2004, and Nadler and Stockdale, 2012). Recent research undertaken by Lucat (2017) has also observed that within video games, fathers are consistently represented in line with patriarchal values. The film industry can be observed to go further than this and examples exist whereby caregiving fathers face mockery, with family comedy movies such as 'Daddy Day-Care' and 'What to Expect When You're Expecting' consistently mocking fathers when they display caregiving behaviours (Sunderland, 2006). More recent UK television comedies such as 'Motherland' and 'Catastrophe' portray caregiving fathers in a similar light. Whilst not unilateral, such populist representations can be observed to be the norm and consistently transmit the message that caregiving behaviour undertaken by fathers is both unusual and a source of humour, which can be observed to be a factor in the transmission of what is acceptable behaviour for a father and what is not.

Through locating fathers in the role of breadwinner, traditional conceptualisations of being a 'good father' automatically place fathers in an absent role from their families (Collier, 1995; and Cohen, 1993) due to the assumed incompatibility of families and work demands (Collinson and Hearn, 1994). It has been proposed that fathers in the workplace are considered to be "professionals without caring responsibilities", as fatherhood status is not assumed to affect the working life and jobs of individual men (Kugelberg, 2006; 158), essentially an 'ideal unencumbered worker' (Acker, 1990; and Coltrane, 2004) as alluded to in chapter three which is defined as someone who

has no other demands on their time and are physically separated from the home (Halford et al, 1997). Breadwinner discourse is indicative that fatherhood is symbolic of a dedicated and reliable worker (Connell, 2005; and Hodges and Budig, 2010) associated with stability, flexibility, commitment, increased work effort and financial responsibility, (Arrighi and Maume, 2000; Townsend, 2002; Fuegen et al, 2004; and Kmec, Huffman and Penner, 2014), with fathers believed to be more settled and focused on their job role than non-fathers (Halford et al, 1997; and Kugelberg, 2006). Motherhood has been judged to be incompatible with notions of the ideal unencumbered worker whilst by contrast, fatherhood is considered to be compatible such that fathers have been found to experience a 'fatherhood premium' in the labour market (Loh 1996; and Correll, 2007, citing Hersch and Stratton 2000). With fathers being evaluated as more competent, warm, and fit for promotion than non-fathers and it has been observed that fathers may actually enjoy a 'fatherhood benefit' in the workplace (Cuddy et al, 2004; Correll et al 2007; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013). This is extremely pertinent to this study, as the empirical part of the research will explore if the observed pattern of 'benefits' and 'premiums' emerge in the same way for UK caregiving fathers as they have emerged for US breadwinning fathers.

### **Breaking Away from Traditional Parental Gender Norms**

Chapter three offered several potential explanations for the increase in parents breaking away from traditional parental gender norms with government and organisational policy outlined as all having a part to play in decision-making regarding the divisions of caregiving within families (Hobson 2011; 2014). A key explanation for outlined rise in caregiving fathers and full-time working mothers can be found at the

micro level, inside the families themselves with economic rationality, demographics and the desire by mothers to play a central role in parenting, outlined as fundamental factors.

Economic rationality can be considered to have a central part to play in decisions within families with regard to maintenance or rejection of traditional parental gender norms. As identified in chapter two, women in the UK continue to earn less than men, currently 18.1% (ONS, 2017, *'Families in the labour market'* report) therefore, fathers may remain in the role of breadwinner due to the reduced earning power of the mother (Connell, 2000). It has been proposed that due to earning more, a pattern of long working hours is established for fathers, which keeps them away from the home for longer, perpetuating secondary caregiver status (Singleton and Maher, 2004; Dex and Ward, 2007; and Norman, Elliott and Fagan, 2014). This is supported by the work of Atkinson and Hall (2009) who observed that men are more likely than women to not access flexible working options on financial grounds. For parents who do break away from the traditional gendered parental norms, Holter (2007) postulates that many do this due to finding themselves in 'new circumstances', taking on caregiving responsibilities due to practicality rather than a change in ideology towards being a 'new man'.

The success of fathers in caregiving roles can be observed to be contingent on the circumstances surrounding the rationale for undertaking this role. It has been suggested that when fathers move away from breadwinning due to necessity (such as economic hardship) they report a preference for the role of financial providers (Stevens, 2015) and may feel a sense of resentment (Russell, 1983; and Johnson



and Abramovitch, 1988), which can have a negative effect on the children within the family (Johnson and Abramovitch, 1988). Naturally, the employment of the mother has been found to have an impact on the likelihood of fatherhood involvement with childcare (Jacobs and Kelley, 2006; Merla, 2008; and Rochlen, McKelley and Whittaker, 2010) and mothers' work hours have been found to be central in the shaping of fathers caregiving responsibilities, and on some occasions have been found to have an even larger influence on fathers' caregiving than their own work hours (Norman et al, 2014).

Mothers have been suggested to have a crucial part to play in the extent to which traditional parental gender norms are adhered too, explicitly with regard to the extent that they partake in 'gatekeeping' behaviours (Allen and Hawkins, 1999; and Parke, 2002). The phrase 'maternal gatekeeping' refers to the restricting of paternal involvement through gatekeeping practices such as active discouragement of involvement and routinely monitoring or criticizing fathers involvement (Gaertner Spinrad, and Eisenberg and Greving, 2007) which can be observed to restrict the amount of the caregiving behaviour undertaken by fathers and maintain a more traditional pattern of caregiving within the family (Fischer and Fisher, 2012).

Demographics can also be observed to be a contributory factor to whether or not a parent will break away from traditional parental gender roles. Marks and Palkovitz (2004) found that age, education level and social class of the father are all significant when trying to establish the likelihood of a father taking on a more involved role. They noted that fathers under 40, who were well-educated and middle to upper class were more likely to be involved than fathers who were over 40, non-educated and from any

other social class. This can be linked to the issue of intersectionality, raised in chapter three; whilst out of the scope of this study, it is plausible that the class and background of the participants used in this study could impact on the eventual outcomes, despite not being specifically measured.

Also identified in chapter three was the importance of individuals who deviate from gendered expectations of behaviour face penalties and significantly higher levels of workplace mistreatment than their gender conforming counterparts (Berdahl and Moon, 2013). It is proposed in this study that full-time employed mothers and caregiving fathers, can both be considered to be deviating from parental gender norms and subsequently may both face challenges such as not obtaining promotion, reward disparities and mockery. Whilst the focus of this study is caregiving fathers, in order to establish the terrain in which they are navigating it is necessary to first explore the experiences of mothers who work on a full-time basis who can also be considered to be challenging the traditional gender norms associated with motherhood.

### **Full-Time Mothers at Work**

There has been a significant amount of research that indicates that mothers who work outside of the home face a number of challenges when they reject the more traditional parental gender roles, which extend to both their role as an employee and as a mother. Researchers within the field of work and family note that employed mothers face many challenges in the workplaces as they attempt to combine employment with motherhood, that range from career consequences to more general

workplace mistreatment (Correll et al, 2007; Dodson, 2013; Stone and Hernandez, 2013; and Kmec et al, 2014). Researchers in the US have identified that mothers in the workplace face being 'mommy tracked' which refers to women joining a slower and invariably lower paid career route when they become mothers (Sancier, 1989; Asher, 2011; and Eikhof, 2012). Similarly, women have been found to be considerably more likely to believe that family responsibilities will impact on the kind of work they would like to do than men, with family taking precedent over careers for women in a way that it doesn't for men (Becker and Moen, 1999; Lynch and Lyons, 2008; Lämsä and Hiillos, 2008; and Välimäki, Lämsä, Hiillos, 2009). This effect is so strong that female employment, and consequent earnings, are often constructed as secondary to male employment regardless of their importance (Legerski and Cornwall, 2010). Differentials between mothers and fathers in the workplace are observable from the start of the employment relationship, with women but not men being asked about domestic arrangements and family plans during selection interviews despite UK and US legislation prohibiting such questioning (Colgan and Tomlinson, 1996; Cannon, 1998; and Bragger, Kutcher, Morgan, Firth, 2002). This is indicative that motherhood is assumed to affect the working life of a mother and therefore is a relevant factor in selection decision-making, an association which is not automatically made for fathers, which will be discussed in more depth later in this chapter.

Research undertaken in the US by Fuegen et al (2004) and Correll et al (2007) observed that mothers who work outside of the home on a full-time basis face a 'motherhood penalty', which results in them being less likely to be hired or promoted regardless of qualifications or performance and receive lower starting salaries than

fathers in the workplace with identical qualifications and levels of performance. Once in the workplace mothers have been found to be stereotyped as incompetent, not fully respected as workers, assumed to be less committed to work and make less contribution than non-mothers (Ridgeway and Correll, 2004; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013). One of the reasons offered as an explanation of the 'motherhood penalty' is that motherhood is assumed to be indicative of unreliability and a short-term investment in work (Collinson et al, 1990; Fuegen et al, 2004; Connell, 2005; Benard and Correll, 2010; and Henle, Fisher and Mattingly, 2015). Kugelberg (2006) proposed that parenthood in the workplace is interpreted as motherhood and motherhood is seen to be problematic, whereas fatherhood does not have the same connotations that are aligned with caregiving responsibilities and therefore is not perceived to affect employment in the same way. It will be interesting to explore this in more depth through the data collection part of this study with the aim of understanding the workplace experience and perceptions of fathers who challenge the purported workplace assumption fathers that do not have caregiving responsibilities and establish the impact of such experiences and perceptions.

It is appropriate at this juncture to refer again to the concept of the 'ideal worker' as it appears that there is potential for a tension between it and conceptualisations of what makes a 'good mother'. Specifically, researchers have proposed that a judgement of being a 'good mother' encompasses expectations that all spare time and emotional energy will be directed towards the children, without limit (Hays 1996; Blair-Loy 2003), which is at odds with notions of the 'ideal worker' and being 'readily available'. Subsequently, many working mothers have reported a feeling of needing to "pass the test of manhood" at work, while at the same time engaging in intensive

forms of maternal care-giving (Macdonald, 2011; 29); such conflicting expectations imply that the challenges faced by working mothers are not confined to the workplace.

Full-time employed mothers have been found to be criticised in their role as a mother as well as in the workplace. Specific criticism has been levied in some quarters regarding the perceived lack of involvement in the home (Deutsch and Saxon, 1998), disapproval in a more general sense (Bridges and Orza, 1993) and the perception that children are damaged by mothers working full-time (British Social Attitudes Survey, 2012). Research undertaken with middle class employees in the US found that employed mothers who prioritise work commitments over family commitments are likely to be seen as bad mothers and bad women, to be disliked as women and face more harassment and mistreatment than mothers who spend more time on caregiving (Berdahl and Moon, 2013). Additionally, full-time employed mothers have been judged as less nurturing and less family oriented than non-employed mothers and less nurturing than fellow full-time employees who are fathers (Etaugh and Folger, 1998; and Gungor and Biernat, 2009).

Such workplace and societal judgements might offer explanation, in part, for the predominance of women working part-time in the UK and maintenance of them in primary caregiving roles. As was evident in chapter two, whilst there has been an increase in the prevalence of men working part-time, the 'part-time mother – full-time father' which aligns to the homemaker and breadwinner model, remains predominant (Scott and Cleary, 2013; and ONS, 2017, '*Families in the labour market*' report). When a woman re-enters to paid work after maternity leave this is often in a part-time capacity to permit accommodation of family life (Sheridan, 2004; Konrad, Yang,

Goldberg and Sullivan, 2005; and Nadler and Stockdale, 2012). Whilst part-time work is increasingly available, such roles are largely typified by low wages, limited promotion opportunities and negative workplace judgements (Haas and Hwang, 1995; Hochschild, 1997; Ranson, 2001; and Kugelberg, 2006) a trajectory which has shown little movement in 30 years (Bennett, 1994; Barnes and Fieldes, 2000; and Perrons, 2009). Whilst there are many other explanations for fathers' minority status in the realms of part-time working, which will be discussed later in this chapter, the combination of expectations of full-time working, and a preference for maintenance of the status quo, can be understood.

Thus far, this chapter has demonstrated that parents who conform to the traditional parental gender norms can expect to reap numerous rewards for this behaviour, which included acceptance and specifically for fathers and thus maintenance of hegemonic ideals. It has also been illustrated that for mothers, who move away from this traditional parental gender role ideology, there are a number of penalties with regard to their employment and motherhood. What has yet to be established is the organisational and societal response to fathers who wish to be actively involved in caregiving? Does the pattern mirror that of the experience of mothers or do they have a differing experience?

## **Caregiving Fathers**

Chapter two of this literature review explored the notion that societal ideals surrounding fatherhood are shifting away from domination of the breadwinner father model. It is proposed by Norman (2010) that judgements aligned with being a good

provider are no longer sufficient to affirm status as a 'good father' and that involvement in the care of children and a more active style of parenting is considered to be as, if not more, important (Dermott 2008; Lamb 2008; and Podnieks, 2016). With many researchers espousing that children with highly involved fathers reap a number of benefits, such as increased cognitive competence, increased empathy, less sex-stereotyped beliefs, and a stronger belief that they have control over the world around them (Pruett, 1985; Radin, 1994; and Pleck, 1997), research indicates that fathers are as capable as mothers of being competent and nurturing caregivers (Bronstein and Cowan, 1988; and Silverstein and Auerbach, 1999). Furthermore, when fathers are involved with their children from an early age, it is argued they can become as attuned as mothers in the practice of caregiving (Lamb, Pleck, Charnov and Levine, 1987).

As a consequence of the increased interest in a more active style of parenting, it is proposed that there has been a rise in the prevalence and importance of the model of the 'involved father' (Kaufman and Uhlenberg, 2000; Christiansen and Palkovitz, 2001; and Coley, 2001) and considerable interest in the ramifications of this new model of fathering (Hunter, Riggs, Augoustinos, 2017). For the purposes of this study, the concept of a caregiving father is aligned to the theoretical conceptualisations of an involved father. Involved fatherhood has been considered to comprise three main elements; accessibility, engagement and responsibility (Lamb et al, 1987). 'Accessibility' refers to the physical availability of the father (such as cooking in the kitchen with a child in the room), 'Engagement' is considered to be more intensive, one-to-one interaction time (such as feeding the child, playing or helping with homework) and finally 'Responsibility', which places emphasis on the importance of

the detail of the child's needs and meeting them. More generally, an involved father is described as a father that takes responsibility for daily caregiving activities, is engaged with family life and attentive to children's needs (Solomon, 2014), is emotionally close to their children (Pleck and Pleck, 1997) and an active 'hands-on' sharer of child caring responsibilities (O'Brien, 2005). Research has found that some fathers can be observed to take this further than 'involvement', with an increasing number of fathers in heterosexual relationships taking the lead in providing day-to-day care for their children (Chesley, 2011). Such fathers, it has been suggested, are breaking away from the traditionally held assumptions that place fathers in the role of 'secondary' parent (Fleming and Tobin, 2005; and Maurer and Pleck, 2006).

It is pertinent to note that whilst much research confidently espouses the existence of a new type of fatherhood, UK trend data (such as the ONS Labour Force Survey, March, 2018) is consistent in demonstrating that the model of full-time working father and part-time working mother remains dominant with a fathers primary association being with the workplace, in a breadwinner providing role (Halford et al, 1997; and Podnieks, 2016). Existing research points to fathers still continuing to spend less time caring for children than their spouses (Shows and Gerstel, 2009), rarely reducing their paid work hours for caregiving activities (Aumann, Galinsky, and Matos, 2011). This study explores this in more detail, by looking for signals as to why this situation prevails, despite significant societal changes that are contrary to it. Do managers in 2018 recognise this phenomena? Can they offer any rationale for its persistence? The existing literature provides some explanations to these questions by illustrating the persistence of traditional parental gender roles through outlining the challenges faced by caregivers in the workplace which can be considered to "pull men out of the



home and push women into it” (Berdahl and Moon, 2013; 343). However, a wider exploration of the workplace response to caregiving fathers is necessary to fully understand the dominance of the breadwinner father model.

### **The Challenge for Caregiving Fathers**

Academic discourse in the work and family arena points to a variety of challenges facing caregiving fathers who can be conceptualised as moving away from traditional expectations of behaviour regarding fathering practices. Challenges such as social mistreatment and stigma, career penalties, social scrutiny and less workplace support are reoccurring themes in the literature (Wayne and Cordiero, 2003; Cooper and Sparrow, 2013; Berdahl and Moon, 2013; and Locke, 2016). One of the most prominent challenges for caregiving fathers is associated with masculinity and perceptions that such fathers are moving away from what is acceptable behaviour for a ‘real man’.

It has been proposed that breadwinning is still considered by some theorists to be intrinsically linked to masculinity (La Valle, 2002; Holter 2007; Dermott 2008; and Williams 2008) and fathers who can be seen to be shifting away from the traditional breadwinning model, can be observed to be in a state of flux due to misalignment with the hegemonic masculine norm of providing (Ferree, 1991; and Connell, 2005). Thus, the fatherhood benefit which was proposed earlier in this chapter appears to be contingent on a display of a more traditional breadwinning approach to fathering, with caregiving fathers appearing to have a different experience. Harriman even goes as far as to say that caregiving fathers, who can be seen to be challenging the male

stereotype, are judged more harshly than women who challenge stereotypical gender expectations, due to the rigid nature of the male stereotype (Harriman, 1996).

As stated earlier, theorists have observed that mainstream media often places ridicule and mockery on 'new men' (Segal, 2006) with fathers who relinquish paid work due to caregiving responsibilities in particular being found to be regularly subject to teasing (Solomon 2014; 28), both inside and outside of the workplace (Berdahl and Moon, 2013). Men who wish to be actively involved in family life voiced concerns regarding being perceived as "wimpy and girly" (McDowell, 2015; 3, citing Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005), a "sissy" (Kimmel, 1994; 119) and a "feminine man" (Locke, 2016; 199). More generally, men who express caring or emotional attributes at work (which are arguably aligned to displays of caregiving behaviour) can be considered to be challenging dominant definitions of masculinity and expect to be feminised by other workers and described as women (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003).

Such disapproval on the grounds of impeded masculinity is particularly prominent in the work and family literature, with caregiving behaviour being considered to be in some way demonstrative of reduced masculinity. As established earlier in this chapter, the key elements of 'being a man' are not traditionally associated with parenting (Podnieks, 2016) and can be seen as a challenge to the traditional hegemonic masculine ideal (Simpson, 2004; and Doucet, 2006). Many workplaces continue to be guided by traditionally gendered conceptions of the division of paid and domestic work (Burnett et al, 2013), with contribution to the household finances being considered as the actions of 'real men' (Vandello et al, 2008) and investing

time in caregiving being viewed as “not a fit occupation for men” (Connell, 1987; 106). Consequently, working less hours due to caregiving responsibilities may result in judgements of being less masculine, having lower status and respect than men who do not reduce work time in this way (Berdahl et al, 1996; Vandello et al, 2008; Rudman and Mescher, 2013; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013). Such judgements offer explanation about why some fathers may be reluctant to relinquish paid work status and risk a reduction in status (Daniels, 1987).

With this in mind, it is not surprising that fathers who choose to be ‘stay at home fathers’ have been observed to receive the lowest approval ratings when compared to other parent scenarios (Riggs, 1997; Doucet, 2006; and Doucet and Merla, 2007). Such fathers report feeling like “a failed man” (Doucet and Merla, 2007; 263) and be viewed as ‘good for nothing’ when they relinquish paid work (Vandello et al, 2008). This perception is further evidenced by Locke (2016; 202) who recalls a scenario depicted by journalist and author India Knight regarding a stay at home father at a dinner party, she states “everyone round the table thinks ‘not hugely manly is it” and that this viewpoint is predominant as such a role is not a ‘masculine pursuit’ and which makes the man seem ‘womanly”. Similarly, Solomon (2014) interviewed Canadian stay at home fathers and reported their family choices left them with feelings of emasculation as they challenge conceptions of traditional masculinity and breadwinning assumptions. Whilst this study is not specifically exploring perceptions of stay at home fathers, the study design allows for an exploration of the broader grouping of caregiving fathers which is broad enough to capture such effects.

Collinson (1992 cited in Haywood Mac an Ghail; 33) suggested that modern men have “masculine schizophrenia” whilst trying to take on domestic responsibilities and maintain their masculinity through disconnection from the domestic sphere. This situation can be observed to create a state of flux for modern men, resulting in a sense of “chronic insecurity” as they aspire to meet the appropriate (ever changing) hegemonic standard (Kaufman 1999, Connell, 2000; and Simpson, 2004; 365) and face increasing conflict between work and family (Aumann, Galinsky and Matos, 2011). Fathers who have moved away from breadwinning have been observed to “acutely feel the loss of breadwinner role” (Wall, Aboim, and Marinho, 2007; and Solomon, 2014: 240) and attempt to minimise the impact of these through undertaking traditional masculine activities around their houses and in the community (Doucet, 2006, 2009; and Chesley, 2011). However, some researchers believe that the increased involvement of fathers in caregiving is no longer intertwined with perceptions of reduced masculinity (Levine and Pitt, 1995; and Marsiglio, 1998) and it is becoming more socially acceptable to manage family life in a more equalitarian way (Allen and Hawkins, 1999; Merla 2008; and Doucet 2006), although, as stated earlier, this is not reflected in the UK labour market statistics.

It appears that fathers might not be accepted at home in the same way that women are accepted arguably at the workplace (Pleck and Pleck, 1997; and Lamb, 2004). Academics have proposed that men who challenge stereotypical expectations of behaviour through active involvement in family life can expect to face judgements of disapproval from others (Doucet, 2006; and Doucet and Merla, 2007). The disapproval has been found to be levied from both male and female co-workers, albeit its nature seems to be gender dependant, with women found to perceive caregiving

fathers as “merely wanting to get out of breadwinner obligations” and “real men” feeling dislike towards them (Podnieks, 2016; 15). This notion of being disliked and disapproved of is closely linked to conceptions of stigmatisation, discrimination and social mistreatment.

Caregiving fathers have been observed to be potentially stigmatised in the workplace, encounter prejudice and experience implicit and explicit workplace discrimination (Wayne and Cordiero, 2003; and Locke, 2016). Berdahl and Moon (2013; 343) are more explicit with this identification of stigma and observed that fathers who undertook a considerable amount of childcare experienced discrimination within the workplace, which they termed as “not man enough”, leading to perceived harassment and mistreatment. They continue that this “involves derogating a target for being insufficiently masculine or too feminine” (Berdahl et al, 1996; 343; Berdahl and Moore, 2006; and Waldo et al., 1998). Berdahl and Moon (2013; 343) explored the workplace treatment of parents defined as the “everyday treatment at work among co-workers” specifically those that can be considered to violate gender norms, such as caregiving fathers. They observed that caregiving fathers faced considerable social mistreatment, which is outlined as a key mechanism for providing feedback and included being teased, put down, or excluded by colleagues. Such social mistreatment can be considered to be a central mechanism by which to transmit an immediate message regarding approval and status (Duffy, Ganster, Shaw, Johnson, and Pagon, 2006) and can be construed to have a detrimental impact on the careers of caregiving fathers.

Researchers in the area of fatherhood studies have proposed that a perception exists that fathers undertaking a more equalitarian approach to parenting responsibilities, moving away from more traditional patterns, will lead to “career death” (Reeves, 2002, cited in Halford, 2006; 387) and naturally, many fathers are resistant to this negative impact on their careers (Gatrell et al, 2014). This impact has been conceptualised more recently by the Modern Families Index (2017) produced by the ‘Working Families’ charity as the ‘fatherhood penalty’. Whether this is a perception or a reality is a moot point as earlier research by Moss and Deven (1999) observed that many fathers fear the negative reactions of caregiving behaviours of managers and peers, rather than specifically believing that it will result in career implications. Although this can be considered to be a reality as research has found that caregiving fathers have been rated as less professionally competent than fathers who work full-time (Brescoll, and Ullmann, 2005; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013). Once again, the notion of the ‘ideal worker’ is relevant, as caregiving fathers can be construed as moving away from conceptualisations of the ‘readily available worker’, in the same way that women have historically. Some of the challenges facing caregiving fathers can be considered to be broader, with such fathers reporting a sense of social exclusion.

Theorists have found that caregiving fathers can feel social exclusion, both within the workplace and society more general. For example caregiving fathers have been observed to find attending activities with their children, such as such as playgroups, as challenging and report feeling ‘ostracized’ by the mothers (who are in the majority) in attendance (Sheridan, 2004, Doucet, 2004; and Merla, 2008). Such experiences have been found to lead to feelings of isolation and social exclusion (Bird, 1996;

Berdahl and Moon, 2013; and Locke, 2016) as caregiving fathers struggle for social legitimacy (Doucet and Merla, 2007). Caregiving fathers (specifically stay at home fathers in this research) can be observed to have 'minority status', and such a status has been found to incur feelings of isolation and pressure which can constrain caregiving (Kanter, 1977; and Simpson, 2004) and potentially act as a barrier to undertaking caregiving behaviours which will be specifically explored in qualitative data collection of this study. Caregiving fathers also face challenges with regard to their actual parenting, which can be likened to the scrutiny observed for full-time mothers explored earlier in this chapter.

Existing literatures in the work and family discipline are indicative that caregiving fathers have also been found to be judged negatively as carers and feel under pressure to be earning and encounter "social scrutiny" (Doucet and Merla, 2007; 363). In more recent research with stay at home fathers, Doucet (2009; 115) observed that such scrutiny resulted in social interactions being "tinged with suspicion". This is illustrated by a quote from her study; "in a society where people believe that men and women are equal ..., they don't really believe that men can do this with a baby, especially a really tiny baby." Notions of caregiving fathers facing social scrutiny can be likened to the experience of full-time working mothers who have been observed to face similar types of judgements (Bridges and Orza, 1993; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013). In which both parents "feel different from the category in which they fall" (Janasz, Forret, Haack and Jonsen, 2013; 205). However, it is relevant to note that some researchers have observed that fathers receive more praise than mothers for involvement in parenting (Deutsch and Saxon, 1998; and Deutsch, Roska and Meeske, 2003).

The final challenge for caregiving fathers that has emerged from the work and family discourse is the concept that fathers obtain less workplace support than mothers. Whilst most organisations have policies in place to assist employees to manage their work and home life (such as flexible working and part-time working) which are invariably for all staff and normally underpinned by legislation (see chapter two) a perception remains that such policies are primarily associated with mothers and constructed as a women's issue (Lewis, Gambles and Rapoport, 2007; and Norman, 2010). Children are often considered to be a women's issue, regardless of the working hours of the mother, an association that is not made for fathers, consequently, flexible working arrangements that facilitate active involvement are not linked to fathers (Lewis, 1997; and Smithson and Stokoe, 2005).

It appears that fathers face a number of specific challenges when accessing policies that will assist them with caregiving behaviour in the workplace (Smithson, Lewis, Cooper and Dyer, 2004; and Lewis et al, 2007). They have been found to have a lack of awareness about the existence of such policies and managers appear to have a lack of awareness about their applicability to fathers (Sheridan, 2004) whereas women have been found to be more aware of the different types of policies available to them to assist with caregiving than men (Kersley, Alpin, Forth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix, and Oxenbridge, 2006). Additionally, Sheridan (2004) observed that the perception of an unsuccessful application can act as a barrier to accessing such policies and mothers have been found to be three times more likely to ask for flexibility in working arrangements than fathers (Teasdale, 2012). This perception can be considered to be grounded in reality, as researchers have found that fathers do have



less access than mothers to flexible working arrangements (Dex and Ward, 2007) with requests being more likely to be rejected (Fagan et al, 2006). It is proposed that in the climate of such negative responses to requests for flexible working made by fathers there is a tendency to fall back into traditional gender roles and associated patterns of work (Miller, 2011, cited by Gatrell and Cooper, 2016).

With this in mind, workplace support for caregiving behaviour can be constructed as a potential favour, a maternal privilege that mothers in the workplace receive, a favour which is not afforded to fathers, essentially (Lewis, 1997; and Gatrell and Cooper, 2016). Workplace support for caregiving has been observed to be the consequence of negotiation, and in this negotiation, fathers have less power than mothers (Bloksgaard, 2014), which is an unfamiliar position for men to be in within the workplace (Gatrell et al, 2014). According to this perspective, motherhood can be viewed as reaping workplace benefits rather than workplace penalties as suggested earlier in this chapter by the research of Correll (2007). This viewpoint will be specifically tested in the quantitative data of this study, which investigates this issue with specific focus on the flexible working practice of part-time working, by asking participants to rate fictitious working parent applications for a part-time position and a full-time position which will enable an analysis of any differentials.

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has navigated the terrain surrounding the experiences and perceptions of fathers in the workplace to provide theoretical underpinning to the empirical work. It began with exploring the manifestations of traditional parental gender roles in the

workplace, proposing that this is conceptualised as a mother having primary affiliation with the home and a father with the workplace, and a strong adherence to norms of hegemonic masculinity and traditional femininity was evident (West and Zimmerman, 1987 cited by Solomon, 2014; Connell, 1992; and Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Whilst this study is focused on fathers, for the purposes of comparison, literature pertaining to the workplace experience of both parents has been examined to understand if any differentials exist between the experience of mothers and fathers which is essential if the research questions are to be adequately addressed in this study.

The chapter has established that maintenance of the parental status quo can result in many benefits for both parents in the workplace with evidence showing how economic rationality, personal choice and demographics all have a role in the maintenance of the traditional fathering norms. Fathers who adhere to the role of provider have been shown to expect numerous workplace benefits including being perceived as having more reliability, dedication, commitment and alignment to the concept of the 'ideal worker'. Parents who can be conceptualised as challenging parental gender norms, are proposed to have a rather different experience.

Caregiving fathers have also been observed to face many workplace challenges when trying to combine work and family commitments, identified as impeded masculinity, social mistreatment, stigma and discrimination, social exclusion and career penalties. This discourse is central to the empirical part of this study as these key themes will be specifically explored through vignette based focus groups with managers and interviews with working parents (further discussed in chapter five).

Much research in this domain has been undertaken in the US and often with students, therefore the perceptions of managers and parents within a UK context will be a key contribution to the knowledge in this area. Additionally, the literature is indicative that caregiving fathers are likely to receive less workplace support than mothers. In particular, there are indications that fathers have reduced access to working arrangements that facilitate caregiving, such as part-time working, which can be seen as having a critical role the maintenance of breadwinning norms. This will be specifically explored in the study design, which is outlined in the following chapter along with a detailed exploration of the methodological approach adopted.

## **Chapter Five - Methodology and Research Methods**

This chapter explores the various methodological approaches available to a researcher with regards to paradigms of enquiry, ontological and epistemological standpoints, the purpose of which is to establish the most effective way to explore the experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers in contemporary employment.

The study has spent considerable time investigating the approaches previous researchers have adopted in the work and family research paradigm. It was apparent very early in this process that much existing research had adopted a largely positivistic approach, involving surveys and utilising students as participants (such as that deployed by Correll et al, 2007 and Berdahl and Moon, 2013). Whilst such research has been illuminating, such positivistic methodology falls short of providing a full explanation of the workplace perceptions and experiences of caregiving fathers. Some existing survey-based theories have observed that caregiving fathers are rated as less popular than more traditional fathers, however, they do not tell us why this may occur, the nature of such discrimination or if it necessarily accurately represents experiences in UK workplaces.

This research aims to investigate the experiences and perceptions of UK caregiving fathers through the lens of the social actors involved, specifically working parents and managers, and adopts a constructivist approach to permit a fuller explanation of workplace practices than a positivistic approach would allow. Obtaining the voice of such social actors is believed to have a central part to play in the gaining of a detailed and unique understanding of the experience and perceptions of caregiving fathers.

Through adopting a constructivist paradigm of inquiry it is believed that data can be gathered which will enable a fuller understanding of how managers and working parents construct their realities. The study aligns the constructivist paradigm of enquiry with an epistemological position of interpretivism/social construction, which acknowledges the many factors that can potentially impact on subjective interpretations of behaviour (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Remenyi, Williams, Money and Swartz et al, 1998; and Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The chapter justifies why the study adopts the philosophical approach of constructivism, also considering the other options available to researchers and explores the consequences of adopting an epistemological and ontological position of constructivism and interpretivism. In doing so the chapter aims to identify ways in which to maximise the success of such an approach through an exploration of its challenges and strengths.

The aim is to develop a critical discussion that explores the methods available to the researcher and identifies a clear rationale for the adopted approach along with the ways in which both quantitative and qualitative data are explored. This is to enable a wider, yet inclusive, discussion in the results chapters. Naturally, the chapter would be incomplete without an exploration of the critical factors of research ethics, sampling, voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity in order to ensure that the best academic standards are upheld.

As introduced above, the study aims to “To explore the experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers in contemporary employment”. The term ‘caregiving father’ is a broad term and is utilised to include part-time working fathers, fathers who work flexibly and stay at home fathers. For the purposes of the online vignette (see later in

this chapter), the caregiving father is presented as a father who wishes to work part-time to “improve his work-life balance and spend more time with his children” (see appendix 2 for a copy of the vignette). Data obtained from the online vignette is focused on addressing research question one whilst research questions two and three are addressed through vignette-based focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

### **Paradigm of Inquiry**

The purpose of establishing the paradigm of enquiry is to identify the relationship between the researcher’s positioning of their ontology and epistemological foundations that underpin the empirical part of this study (Guba, 1990; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Howell, 2013). A number of paradigms of inquiry were initially considered, such as the more traditional approaches of positivism and post-positivism (Remenyi et al, 1998; and Grix, 2002), primarily due to their prevalence in the existing literature (such as Correll et al, 2007 and Berdahl and Moon, 2013). However, as Creswell (2009) observed, such approaches are rooted in causality with an emphasis in hypotheses testing using statistical methods, which does not necessarily provide a full and detailed explanation of the experiences and perceptions required to answer the research aim. While these approaches have decades of use by researchers it was felt that they would be inappropriate to address the research questions set out earlier in this study, primarily because of the complexity of the experience of caregiving fathers and, in all likelihood, the inability for scales or measures to capture this and provide answers to the questions posed by this study.

The most appropriate paradigm for this research is the constructivist paradigm of inquiry. Constructivists advocate that individuals seek understanding of the world that they live in, developing the subjective meaning of their experiences and, due to the complexity of these meanings, researchers seek a breadth of views rather than narrowing the meanings into a few categories (Creswell, 2009). Constructivism assumes that social actions and associated meanings are continually undertaken by individuals, constantly being revised, and are influenced by an individual's own social and historical perspective and a wide array of social and cultural factors (Crotty, 1998; and Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Specific to this study, the role of a 'father' in its very nature can be considered to be a social construct, meaning different things to different people with fathers constructing their view of reality surrounding this meaning. For example, this may range from, 'I am a father and my role is to support the family therefore I work full-time and am not a caregiver' to 'I am a father, therefore, I want to be actively involved in the caregiving of my children'. Such differing constructions of reality are likely to result in very different choices with regard to working arrangements. In the face of the potential complexity of constructions that exists surrounding working fatherhood, it is important to outline the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of this study.

## **Ontology and Epistemology**

The ontological position adopted by research essentially outlines what constitutes the nature of the social reality being investigated (Blaikie, 2000; and Hay, 2002). Grix (2002) identifies that researchers are faced with two main options with regard to the

choice of ontological position, which is that of objectivism and constructivism. Objectivism is described as a position which asserts that “social phenomena and the associated meaning exist independent of social actors” (Bryman, 2001; 16-18), however, it is believed that this is not appropriate for this research as the social actors (working parents and managers) are considered to be central to a deeper understanding of workplace experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers. Therefore, this research adopts an ontological position of constructivism with the experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers constructed because they emerge through constant fluctuations of social interaction, in which the establishment of their truths has been developed through complex community negotiations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

Constructivism is an appropriate approach for this research as it allows the researcher to establish meanings from the comments made by the participants, taking a subjectivist position. Objective reality is difficult for this topic as there are numerous potentially opposing constructions about what it means to be a father and it is unlikely that ‘one truth’ will, or indeed could, ever emerge. However, the following statements depict what are considered to be the key ontological beliefs of this research: first, that in society, people form views about other people based on past experiences; second, that the roles of ‘father’ and ‘mother’ are constructed differently in the contemporary workplace; third, that perceptions about fathers are socially constructed and not ‘naturally occurring’; and finally, management perceptions of fathers and paternal experiences are influenced by parental gender norms and expectations of behaviour in line with this (Luzadis et al, 2008; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013). Whilst a constructivist approach can be considered to be time-



consuming and potentially results in obtaining less data than some more objective approaches (Anderson, 2009) such as using surveys, it is believed that adoption of a constructivist ontology presents a better opportunity to obtain the deeper understanding needed to explain the experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers as espoused by Geertz (1973).

Turning to epistemology, once again researchers are required to decide on the relationship between the researcher and researched (Howell, 2013) with the purpose of providing explanations for the way in which knowledge of reality can be gained (Blaikie, 2000). The central dichotomy of options available to researchers regarding epistemology has been suggested by Grix (2002) to be Positivism or Interpretivism (the latter being a component within social construction).

Positivism places emphasis on objective scientific methods, collecting facts using quantitative data and testing hypotheses with an emphasis on statistically viable methods. It is based on assumptions that both natural and human sciences are similar and have shared logical and methodological principles (Remenyi et al, 1998; Grix, 2002; and Gray, 2004). However, as this research emphasises understanding of individuals' perceptions of the world and, with human behaviour being both unpredictable and sometimes irrational, this leads the research to a closer alignment with an epistemological position of interpretivism (Remenyi et al, 1998). Specifically, the approach adopted is considered more suitable due to the large number of factors that impact upon perceptions of caregiving fathers in contemporary UK workplaces. Such subjective interpretations and feelings of individuals are considered to be critical in understanding of the experience of caregiving fathers and thus the data collection

is focused on words, observations and meanings rather than facts and figures (Creswell, 1994), acknowledging the impact of social construction on the actual behaviour of participants (Easterby-Smith and Lyles, 2011).

Within this ontological position of constructivism, and an epistemological position of interpretivism/social constructivism, it is necessary to establish exactly “how does the investigator go about finding out what he/she believes can be discovered” (Howell, 2013: 28) through establishing the methodological approach? The approaches of grounded theory, ethnography and action research were all initially considered and have many potential merits. However, such approaches were eventually rejected in favour of a hermeneutical approach, which was considered to be closely aligned with the aim of this study. Hermeneutics can be observed to implicitly underpin qualitative inquiry and has been specifically chosen due to its alignment with the research questions which advocate an approach of seeking understanding (Kinsella, 2006). Hermeneutics utilises an “evolving linguistic framework that has been worked out over time in terms of some historically conditioned set of concerns and practices”, (Wachterhauser, 1986; 6) which aligns closely to the socially constructed nature of this study. Hermeneutics advocates the importance of history when seeking understanding (Gadamer, 1996), and given the historical evolution of gendered work and roles, is deemed critical for this study. Seeking an understanding of the experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers without acknowledging the role that pre-established traditional patterns of parental behaviour plays within this would be challenging, or indeed, foolish.

Having therefore established a constructivism paradigm incorporating a co-location with interpretivism underpinned by a hermeneutical approach, the chapter now turns to explain the research methods in depth, exploring how the research questions will be specifically addressed and identifying the modes of data collection.

## **Research Methods**

This study employed a strategy of mixed methods in order to explore fully the experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers in contemporary employment, allowing for a better understanding of the issues facing this population and their complexity than a quantitative or qualitative method alone would permit (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Molina-Azorin and Cameron, 2010). The mixed-methods approach has been steadily gaining popularity since the 1990's, with some academics going as far as to identify it as the *"third major research approach"* (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007:112). This increasing presence has been specifically observed in the disciplines of sociology, psychology and management, all of which have synergies with this research (Molina-Azorin and Cameron, 2010; Molina-Azorin, 2011).

The design involved an online questionnaire based on a vignette created by the researcher, focus groups based on the same vignette and then semi-structured interviews which explored issues that emerged from the previous methods. The purpose of undertaking the online vignette at the start of the study was to establish at an embryonic stage of the study if a difference existed between how caregiving

fathers might be rated compared to other working parent scenarios. Such knowledge regarding the perception of caregiving fathers was believed to be essential to underpin the qualitative element of the study, and provide justification for the remainder of the research.

A key benefit of the mixed-methods approach is that it enables the triangulation of data (Creswell, 2009) which is considered to be a critical element of research in social sciences (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), allowing the “*most persuasive evidence*” to be obtained (Freshwater, 2007:141). Such a complementary method of exploring social phenomena is arguably the most effective way to explore the perceptions and experiences of caregiving fathers, providing broader perspectives and greater insight to satisfactorily address the aim and answer the research questions than mono method research designs would be able to (Bryman, 2008, Fielding, 2009; Molina-Azorin and Cameron, 2010).

By utilising both quantitative and qualitative data it is envisaged that the benefits of both methods will be maximised and the respective weaknesses of each method will be avoided (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). Despite the differing nature of the data, they can be considered compatible due to being viewed as different ends of a continuum rather than complete opposites (Newman and Benz, 1998).

It is important to acknowledge that this view is not universal and some theorists view the data as incompatible (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010; and Lund, 2012). Additionally, it is appropriate to observe that such a mixed-methods design is believed to require more extensive time and resources than a mono method research

design (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2007; Molina-Azorin, 2011). However, due to the perceived value of combining the two types of data in increasing existing understanding regarding the experience and perceptions of caregiving fathers this approach was adopted.

### **The Online Vignette**

An online vignette was developed as the first research method as it was considered to be appropriate to establish at the outset of the study if any differences existed between the ways in which working parents are perceived in contemporary workplaces. Previous research in a US context with student participants (Correll et al, 2007; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013) adopted this approach and found gendered differentials. It was considered relevant to ascertain if the effect observed in the US with student participants emerged in a UK context with managers and working parents before embarking on a more in-depth exploration of the perceptions and experiences of caregiving fathers through qualitative analysis. This method also had the additional benefits of being quick to administer, cost-effective, able to reach large audiences and provides little room for bias (Whittaker, 2009; and Collis and Hussey, 2013).

Whilst the online vignette captures essentially quantitative data, largely associated with a more positivistic paradigm of enquiry, overall, this study adopts a more qualitative approach which allows for deeper storytelling than a statistical model alone can possibly capture, thus the philosophical approach of constructivism outlined above is not challenged (Graham, 2011). Burke and Onwuegbuzie (2004;

19) propose that this approach of supporting qualitative research with a “closed-ended instrument to systematically measure certain factors” which emerged from the literature can benefit both types of data. It improves generalisability, expands knowledge and increases confidence in the conclusions drawn.

It was decided to administer the online vignette via the online platform of Qualtrics Software ®, to remove additional information and protect anonymity (Maylor and Blackmon, 2005; and Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Qualtrics software was chosen due to its capacity to produce complex research tools, publish them via a web link and collect the results swiftly, with minimal cost implications (Barnhoorn, Haasnoot, Bocanegra and van Steenberg, 2015). However, it is acknowledged that there are some limitations with this method, which include issues surrounding how long participants are prepared to spend completing an on-line task and particularly being reluctant to write large amounts of self-completion responses. Concerns around response rates can also be an issue with on-line research methods because there is inability to allow for probing or clarifying responses by the researchers (Sarantakos, 2005). As the online vignette was not being utilised alone and would be part of a mixed methods approach, the inability of an on-line approach to probe and clarify and possibly low response rate was not considered to be a cause of significant concern as the focus groups and interview elements would probe more deeply into participant meanings and understandings. However, the issue of time spent to complete tasks was considered to be critical. To minimise the impact of this the online vignette would be kept focused and brief, particularly as participants were managers or busy parents and were voluntarily taking part in the research for no reward or gain.

The vignette method is popular in gender and family-related research, (Karpinska, Henkens and Schippers, 2011) and permits a wider exploration of human actions than a traditional questionnaire (Ganong and Coleman 2006; and Wallander, 2009). Vignettes involve investigating participant responses to a hypothetical scenario, requiring them to make a choice in response to the scenario which is proposed to have the benefit of resulting in more genuine responses (Ganong and Coleman, 2006). This is of particular importance when participants might be aware that their choices will be judged (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Parental decision-making regarding extent of caregiving can be considered to be fraught with judgements and therefore this was deemed as a highly suitable method.

The independent variables for the vignettes were 'Applicant Working Hours' (full-time/part-time) and 'Gender of Applicant' (mother/father), resulting in four summary Curriculum Vitae's being employed (part-time mother applicant, part-time father applicant, full-time mother applicant, full-time father applicant). The number of vignettes was purposefully small to minimise the participants difficulties in processing the information as if there is too much information to process it can affect a participant's ability to visualise the hypothetical scenario (Rossi and Anderson 1982; and Karpinska et al, 2011).

The online vignette was designed by the researcher and included a briefing note, a role description for the fictitious vacancy and four summary CV's (see appendix 2). The summary CVs included applicants' career goals, parental status, educational history and past work experience, with all applicants being presented as highly productive (based on the format adopted by Cuddy et al, 2004, and Correll et al,

2007). Critical to the success of the vignette approach is that the scenario is convincing and this is a challenge with this approach (Miles and Huberman, 1994). To this end considerable attention was paid to the development of the vignettes to maximise their credibility and equality. To ensure this cognitive testing (Fevre, Robinson, Jones and Lewis, 2010; Lewis, Hoel and Einarsdottir, 2013) was undertaken with post-graduate human resource management students which involved trialling the vignettes with students on three occasions. Consequently, adjustments were made based on feedback to minimise any areas of potential participant confusion which could be enhanced with greater clarity and also so that, as far as possible, the hypothetical applicants were considered to be equally well qualified for the role (as reported by Fuegen et al, 2004).

As outlined above, care was spent in the description of a caregiving father and it was considered critical to the success of this study that a caregiving father was accurately represented in the vignettes. To this end, the caregiving father, and mother for the purposes of comparison, were introduced in the vignette study as applying for a part-time (17.5 hours per week) role by way of indicating, without being explicit, their caregiving status. Caregiving status was reinforced for the caregiving father with this statement; 'He is applying for the part-time role as he wants to improve his work-life balance and spend more time with his children, twin boys aged two'.

This study aimed to obtain greater knowledge on the workplace experience and perceptions of contemporary caregiving fathers from the viewpoint of managers (and working parents for the qualitative semi-structured interviews) as much existing research in this area has involved student participants (Etaugh and Folger, 1998;



Feugen et al, 2004; Correll et al 2007; and Luzadis et al, 2008). This decision was underpinned by the belief that students often have difficulty in responding to hypothetical workplace scenarios due to lack of work experience (Luzadis et al, 2008) and are often unaware of the realities of modern workplaces (Landy, 2008). This meant that student respondents could not maximise the theoretical contribution of the research study to the existing theoretical landscape. To this end, and to increase the likelihood that the findings of this research would accurately reflect contemporary workplace practices, one pre-requisite was that all participants had to have 'management experience and experience of recruitment and selection'. It was considered important that manager participants had experience of recruitment and selection to enable them to focus on the online vignette task rather than gaining familiarity with the process.

The initial sample was obtained through emailing a link to the Qualtrics ® online vignette to local managers and HR Managers and they were asked to circulate to managers within their organisation. This snowballing technique was employed as it was considered to be suitable for participants who are challenging to reach, such as managers (Karpinska, Henkens and Chippers, 2011). The initial trawl of potential participants did not have as high a response rate as anticipated (Collins and Hussey, 2013) and therefore the researcher undertook a second trawl which involved sending reminders to the previous potential participants and sharing the Qualtrics ® link via the researcher's 'LinkedIn' ® page, which resulted in a further sixty participants. 'LinkedIn' ® was chosen as a method of obtaining participants due to this platform being widely associated with managers and professionals (Skeels and Grudin, 2009). The sample was completed via posting a reminder via 'LinkedIn' ®.

No participants were offered incentives to take part in the study, despite this being a popular way to increase response rates which has been utilised in similar research (Correll et al, 2007; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013). The rationale for this was that if incentives were offered this might encourage participants to exaggerate their management experience and extent of exposure to recruitment and selection, which could have resulted in inaccurate data. Additionally, research has found that incentives are ineffective in motivating participants with high levels of literacy and education, these are characteristics associated with the desired participants (Berlin, Mohadjer, Waksberg, Kolstad, Kirsch, Rock and Yamamoto, 1992; and Singer; 2002).

Once participants followed the Qualtrics ® web link, they were requested to complete the consent form and state their gender to protect anonymity personal details such as age and ethnicity were not sought (in line, with Gatrell et al, 2014).

In the next stage the participants were given a brief description of the task, which was to rate applicants for a Customer Services Manager role at a hypothetical bank entitled 'High Street Bank' and a role description (see appendix 2). This role was chosen as it was believed to be relatively gender-neutral, and the researcher was keen to avoid professions such as nursing and engineers in which there is a predominance of one gender over another (Howe, 2011). The task was in two parts: part one required participants to read two applicant summary CV's (vignettes) for a part-time role, Clare and David, and then rate those applicants. For part two participants were informed that the previous post holder had left employment and

participants were required to recruit for a full-time Customer Services Manager and needed to rate another two applicant summary CV's - Amelia and Oliver. The rating scores were 0-10 (10 being the highest) based on the criteria of 'workplace commitment', 'hireability', 'promotability' and 'perceived competence' with 0 or 1 being the lowest. These criteria and rating scale were devised by Correll et al (2007) and adopted as they were considered to be well established in this area of research.

### **Vignette Based Focus Groups**

In order to permit a wider understanding of the perceptions and experiences of caregiving fathers in the contemporary workplace, and overcome some of the challenges cited earlier surrounding use of online vignettes, the quantitative data were combined with qualitative data. Focus groups are a popular research method (Anderson, 2004), particularly those based on vignettes (Beaulieu, Hudon, Roberge, Pineault, Forte, and Legare (1999). On a practical level, this method has the benefit of being able to reach a large number of participants in a relatively short space of time (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis in Denzin and Lincoln) and is considered to be less prone to bias and subjectivity than some of the other available research methods (Howell, 2013). On a more theoretical level, focus groups enable the collection of opinions regarding a topic, enabling views to be explored with other participants, resulting in "powerful interpretive insights", that incorporate both content and expression as a result of creating a social interaction (Whittaker, 2009; and Kamberelis and Dimitriadis in Denzin and Lincoln, 2017; 903). Focus groups also have the capacity to expose "unarticulated norms and normative assumptions" which is particularly pertinent for this study, which is investigating the gendered norms for

parental behaviour (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2017; 903). It is important to note that focus groups are not without their limitations. In particular, group dynamics can result in the powerful, extrovert, members overtaking the discussion so less confident participants have only minimal contribution (Whittaker, 2009). The researcher was mindful of this during the vignette based focus groups and ensured that they intervened when necessary to encourage equal participant contributions.

The participants for the vignette based focus groups were obtained through direct requests to Human Resource Managers via email. As with the online vignette, in order to maximise the likelihood that the study would be an accurate reflection of workplace practices the prerequisite of participation was that participants needed to be a manager with experience of recruitment and selection. Eleven HR Managers were contacted regarding the participation of their managers and four HR Managers agreed for their organisations to participate. The vignette based focus groups were all run in situ and the organisations comprised the charity sector, technology, NHS, and Naval (two focus groups). As with the online vignette, no incentives were offered to the participants, however, the HR Managers were offered a training session on 'Gender Stereotyping in the Workplace' as a goodwill gesture.

The online vignette and the vignette based focus groups obtained rich data regarding how caregiving fathers are rated as job applicants when applying for work whilst having caregiving responsibilities. The vignette based focus groups provided some understanding regarding what lies behind the ratings and began creating a sense of how caregiving fathers are perceived in contemporary workplaces. However, in order

to fully address the research aim and research questions, it was necessary to gather wider data from managers and parents to explore in more depth the experience and perception of caregiving fathers and if this offers any explanation for the dominance of the breadwinner model for UK fathers.

Firstly, the observation technique was considered. This can take place in either a natural setting or a controlled environment (Howell, 2013). However, as this method can be ethically challenging and, as difficulties exist in ensuring that neither the researcher nor the research environment impacts participant behaviour (Collis and Hussey, 2013), this method was rejected. Secondly, a diary study method was explored. This would require participants to self-report ongoing experiences, is considered to have high levels of validity and allows for detailed exploration of social, psychological, and physiological processes (Bolger, Davis, and Rafaeli, 2003; and Sherry and Hall, 2009). However, this method was rejected due to the extent of the participant time commitment required (Collis and Hussey, 2013), particularly as this study utilises managers and working parents as participants who are believed to be “*time poor*” (Daly, 2001; 290). The third and final method considered and ultimately adopted was the semi-structured interview.

The semi-structured interview has been described as the “gold standard of qualitative research” (Silverman 2000; 291) resulting in high quality information (Whittaker, 2009). These have the key benefit of allowing the researcher to access information through probing for more detailed responses and thus obtain the “complete story” from the respondents through the establishment of structure, whilst permitting exploration of topics of particular interest (Leidner, 1993; Sheppard, 2004; 149; and

Whittaker, 2009). The semi-structured interviews were normally undertaken face to face, but occasionally via telephone due to participant availability or preference.

The participants for the semi-structured interviews were drawn from a number of different populations, including some participants responding to a direct request from the researcher (via email or LinkedIn®) and others indicating a willingness to participate after undertaking the vignette based focus groups or online vignette. The only prerequisite for participation in the semi-structured interviews was that participants needed to be either a manager or a working parent. Experience in recruitment and selection was not essential for this part of the study as it was concerned with broadly held experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers that would be unaffected by lack of experience of recruitment and selection. It was envisaged that by having minimal prerequisites, there would be a wide variation in participants, which would result in the emerging data being largely representative of the population, enabling generalisations and predictions from the data (Howell, 2013). With the methodology and methods established it is now necessary to explore the way in which the subsequent qualitative and quantitative data obtained will be analysed, with a view to exploring the research questions in depth.

### **Data Analysis- Online Vignette**

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was initially considered as this is a method in which conditions can be compared (Field, 2009). However, it was apparent that whilst ANOVA would uncover if the experimental manipulation was generally successful, ANOVA does not provide information about the specific groups that are affected.

Therefore a more detailed analysis of Co-Variance (ANCOVA) approach was taken. ANCOVA was utilised by Berdahl and Moon (2013) in a very similar study, therefore it seemed highly appropriate to follow their choice of analysis. The main experimental manipulation and dependent variables for this analysis are 'Applicant Ratings', against the measures of 'workplace commitment', 'hireability', 'promotability' and 'perceived competence'. It was also necessary to analyse the impact of 'Applicant Working Hours' (part-time/full-time) and 'Gender of the Applicant' (mother/father) and analyse whether or not these covariates impacted on the dependent variable of 'Applicant Ratings'. Therefore, the independent variables were; full-time mother applicant, full-time father applicant, part-time father applicant and part-time mother applicant.

Whilst some capacity for data analysis exists within Qualtrics ®, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS- 2015 Version) software was employed due to its wider capability, specifically with regard to the production of tables and visual representations (Anderson, Sweeney and Williams-Rochester, 2007). The SPSS analysis was conducted using a General Linear Model with the covariates of 'Gender of Applicant' (mother/father) and 'Applicant Working Hours' (part-time/full-time) against the dependent variables of 'workplace commitment', 'hireability', 'promotability' and 'perceived competence'. Multivariate analysis was undertaken to utilise both a between-subjects and within-subjects design, with effect sizes evaluated using the partial eta-squared statistic (McCann, Songprakun, and Stephenson, 2015). The data analysis then concluded with a presentation and exploration of the estimated marginal means (EMM) to enable a more detailed analysis of the individual dependent variables.

Whilst quantitative data analysis can be very illuminating, it does not illustrate potential reasonings underpinning the ratings assigned to fictitious applicants, or explore how caregiving fathers are perceived and how they perceive their workplace experiences. Therefore, qualitative data analysis was critical to investigate this issue in sufficient depth and to ensure that the research aims are fully addressed.

### **Data Analysis – Vignette Based Focus Groups and Semi-Structured Interviews**

In line with the recommendations of Sim (1998), all of the semi-structured interviews and vignette based focus groups were recorded to allow verbatim analysis and the richest possible data (Perakyla, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). In each meeting, two recorders were used to limit the effect of “hardware malfunctions” (Bryman and Bell, 2011; 489). In addition, the researcher made notes of key points, which enabled non-verbal interaction to be monitored (Sim 1998; and Krueger and Casey, 2009). Upon completion of the first vignette based focus group it was apparent that background noise affected the clarity of the recording and it was challenging to ascertain which voice was associated with which participant when transcribing the content of discussions (Sim, 1998). To overcome this issue, in addition to taking notes, the researcher drew a seating chart of the room (Li and Searle, 2007) and ensured that attention was paid to the placement of the recording device to maximise clarity (Easton, McComish and Greenberg, 2000).

All transcripts were reviewed for accuracy by the researcher prior to initial coding. Each transcription was read and re-read in detail which enabled the researcher to



become thoroughly familiar with the data and develop an in-depth understanding of them, This is particularly important when analysing qualitative data (Perakyla in Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; and Hammersley and Atkinson 2007).

## **Coding Process**

In order to analyse the collected qualitative data and answer the research questions, it is necessary to first categorise the data to enable its management, identifying themes and patterns (Howell, 2013). To this end the coding process was divided into four phases to underpin the qualitative analysis, creating an “analytic scaffolding on which to build” (Charmaz, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; 517).

Phase one began after the researcher was confident that the transcripts were accurate and involved line by line coding, seeking codes that had already been identified from the literature review and aligning them to the research questions. This “start list” (Miles and Huberman, 1994; 58) utilised broad codes to encompass any areas which might potentially be of interest to the researcher; essentially, any reference to the strengths and weaknesses of mother and father applicants discussed in the vignette based focus groups and any references to parental status in the semi-structured interviews. Phase two involved re-reading the transcripts, highlighting and removing any data that was not relevant by way of data reduction (Miles and Huberman, 1994), once again, central to this process was alignment to the research questions.

During phase three the reduced transcripts were read again and the researcher began to group together the statements with regard to the perceptions of parents in contemporary employment. This preliminary coding resulted in fifty-nine codes (see appendix 9) which represented emerging concepts (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This phase of the coding including broad codes such as 'Importance of Equality and Diversity' and 'Fatherhood Benefit'. During the coding process motherhood was coded in the same way as fatherhood, (for example 'Motherhood Penalty' was identified and sub-themes of 'Unconventionality' highlighted, see appendix 9), for the purposes of capturing the data and enabling comparisons to the perceptions of fathers rather than analysis of the perceptions of mothers *per se*.

Phase four of the coding involved revising the codes, which included removing some codes and adding many sub-codes (Miles and Huberman, 1994) allowing for deeper analysis. This level of coding involved emphasis being placed on the codes which appeared most frequently, were discussed in depth by participants and aligned most closely to the research questions. As a consequence, not all codes that emerged were used in the final analysis. At this point in the coding it was decided to remove the distinction between fathers who work on a part-time hour's contract and more generic 'involved' fathers. The rationale for this choice was that both groups raised similar issues. For example, fathers who wanted to work part-time reported being viewed as 'unconventional' as did fathers who wanted to be involved more informally through picking up children from school. Therefore, both fathers who worked on a part-time hourly contract and fathers who described themselves as 'involved' are referred to as 'caregiving fathers' unless the data specifically refers to a part-time father. This process was continued until the researcher felt that the scrutiny of the

data had reached a saturation point and regularities had started to emerge (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

The final eight codes that emerged from phase four are explored in depth through a matrix of three main themes, which housed sub-themes and were considered to be most appropriate to addressing the research questions. For example, within the overarching theme of 'Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving' a sub-theme entitled 'Workplace Support for Caregiving Fathers is Conditional' was created. It is important to note that whilst it is believed this process is effective and has been undertaken in a robust manner, this approach can be described as selective as the researcher consistently makes the choice about what is pertinent and what isn't (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

## **Research Ethics**

Ethical issues can be viewed as any issues involved in the relationship between the researcher and the researched and it is imperative that social research outlines and mitigates against ethical issues (Elliot, 2006; Creswell, 2009; and Collins and Hussey, 2013). House (1990) proposed that ethics should be guided by the principles of mutual respect, non-coercion and non-manipulation and support for democratic values and institutions. This was considered to be a golden thread throughout the study and was adhered to through the conventions of voluntary participation, informed consent and confidentiality and anonymity. Additionally, as a member of the

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) the researcher is also bound by the standards of behaviour set out in their code of professional conduct.

All participants were provided with a Participant Information Sheet and Informed Consent Form (see appendix 1) - participants were asked to sign the latter (for the vignette based focus group and semi-structured interview) or asked to agree to participation in the online vignette. These documents informed participants in a very general way about the nature of the study and were underpinned by the researcher's belief that the provision of broad information is an ethical way to conduct research (Collins and Hussey, 2013). To this end, all participants were advised that the title of this study was "An Exploration of Bias during the Selection Process" and its aim was to "generate knowledge regarding bias" with the purpose being "knowledge generation to offer potential explanations for the judgements at the point of selection with a view to minimisation of disparity in practice". Participants were not given any specifics on the research aim and research questions to avoid participants providing socially acceptable responses (Correll et al, 2007) and to uncover both a genuine rationale for ratings given in the online vignette and the vignette based focus groups and the perceptions and experiences of caregiving fathers (Aronson, Carlsmith, Ellsworth, 1990).

The Participant Information Sheet and Informed Consent document also advised participants of the voluntary nature of their participation (Collins and Hussey, 2013) and their ability to withdraw from the research at any point. All participants were advised that they were protected by a confidentiality agreement which required that their anonymity should be protected throughout, ensuring that they would not be

identified with the views they express, which is also believed to have the benefit of increasing the likelihood of open responses (Collins and Hussey, 2013). The online vignette was anonymous and tracing individual participant's responses was not possible. After that stage, if participants took part in a vignette-based focus group or semi-structured interview the researcher was aware of their identification. However, this did not impact on their anonymity and confidentiality as throughout the research fictitious names were allocated to identify participants. No coercion took place during this research, nonetheless it needs to be acknowledged that the researcher was a member of the teaching team at University of Plymouth and this might have had an indirect or direct impact on participation.

Within this research, the tasks that are undertaken by participants were not viewed as putting the participants in a risky or harmful situation, either physically or psychologically (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The research was governed at all times by University of Plymouth Guidelines and full ethical approval has been granted in accordance with University of Plymouth policy which can be viewed in full here; <http://www1.plymouth.ac.uk/research/ourresearch/Documents/Plymouth%20University%20Research%20Ethics%20Policy.pdf>.

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has charted the terrain in the area of methodology and research methods to establish the nature of this research, inform the way in which the research is undertaken and the data analysed. The different options available to researchers

have been explored with an emphasis placed on the methods that have been chosen and rationale is provided for those choices.

The chapter established that the study adopts a constructivist paradigm of inquiry, as the role of a father is considered to be socially constructed, emerging as a result of both cultural and social practices. Subsequently, the ontological approach of constructivism is adopted due to the complexity of the experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers in contemporary employment being unable to be fully investigated without acknowledging the role of the social actors. The epistemological approach of interpretivism is set out whilst acknowledging that perceptions of unpredictability and subjectivity are an inherent part of research of this type. Finally, the methodological approach of hermeneutics was identified as the most appropriate approach due to its alignment with 'seeking understanding', which is central to this study.

Having established the methodological, ontological and epistemological underpinnings for the study, the chapter has explained the value in adopting a mixed methods approach and highlighted the strategic fit between the on-line vignette, the deployment of vignette based focus groups and semi-structured interviews. By deploying a four-stage coding strategy alongside ANCOVA analysis, the study design addresses the stated research aim and research questions. Ultimately, these are necessary to meet the requirements for doctoral study, which is to contribute new knowledge. As has been already established, much of the existing knowledge raises questions of applicability, either because of where the data come from, their fit to the UK context, or because the approach taken lacks the necessary insights that are

needed to better understand fatherhood in contemporary UK workplaces. This design overcomes these shortcomings. The study now turns its attention to the first of the results chapters, the online vignette.

## **Chapter Six- Quantitative Results**

This chapter focuses on the quantitative data that was obtained through deployment of an online vignette, which specifically addresses research question one;

- How are caregiving fathers rated when applying for working arrangements which facilitate an active role in caregiving?

The chapter begins by presenting the descriptive statistics that emerged from the online vignette to provide an overview of the data prior to a more in-depth exploration of the data utilising analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The ANCOVA test employs multivariate analytics that explore both between-subjects and within-subject effects, obtaining the benefits of both types of test. The between-subjects test explores the relationship between 'Gender of Applicant' (mother/father), the 'Gender of the Participant' (male/female) and overall 'Applicant Ratings'. The within-subjects test explores the relationship between the overall 'Applicant Ratings', 'Gender of Applicant' (mother/father) and 'Applicant Working Hours' (part-time/full-time).

The estimated marginal means (EMM) of the data are then presented to examine the 'Applicant Ratings' against each dependent variable of 'promotability', 'hireability', 'workplace commitment' and 'perceived competence'. This analysis enables an accurate and detailed picture to be established regarding how caregiving fathers are rated when applying for a part-time role. Comparisons between these ratings and ratings of other working parents are enabled through the remaining three conditions of part-time mother applicant, full-time mother applicant, and full-time father applicant. The chapter concludes by summarising the key findings from the



quantitative data with specific reference to research question one which is used to preface exploration of the qualitative data that follows in chapter seven.

### **The Online Vignette**

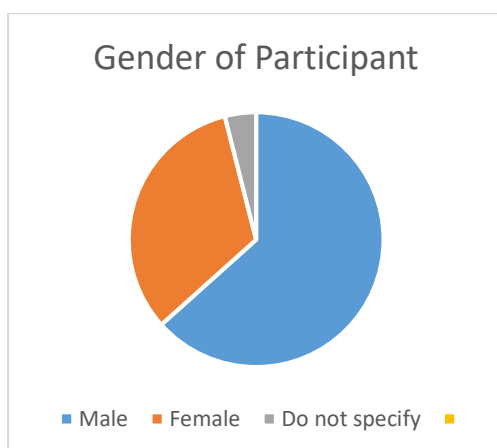
The online vignette required manager participants to follow an email link that initially provided them with information regarding the research to enable them to make an informed decision and give consent to participation. Once an agreement was obtained, manager participants were asked for gender demographic information to enable the 'Gender of the Participant' to be controlled for.

The online vignette required manager participants to imagine that they were in the role of an Area Manager for a fictitious bank identified as 'High Street Bank' and were advised they were recruiting for a Customer Services Manager position. Participants were provided with a role summary that outlined the key responsibilities of the role and they were informed that the task would be in two parts and were initially directed to Part One, which required them to recruit for a part-time (17.5 hours per week) Customer Services Manager. Participants were asked to read two fictitious applicant vignettes and rate their suitability for the role. The applicants presented in the vignettes were considered to be equal in skills and abilities with the only differential being whether they were a mother or a father (see appendix 2). Participants were asked to score applicants out of ten, with one being the lowest score and ten being the highest score on the basis of four characteristics; 'perceived competence', 'workplace commitment', 'hireability', 'promotability'. These four measures were utilised by Correll et al (2007) and considered to be an appropriate measure of applicant quality and to act as the dependent variables of the online vignette.

After completion of Part One, participants moved to Part Two, which involved the same process as before and they were advised that they were now recruiting for a full-time (37.5 hours per week) Customer Services Manager and were presented with two new applicant vignettes, which again were considered to be equal in skills and abilities apart from the manipulation of parental status and the rating criteria was the same.

### Sample Characteristics

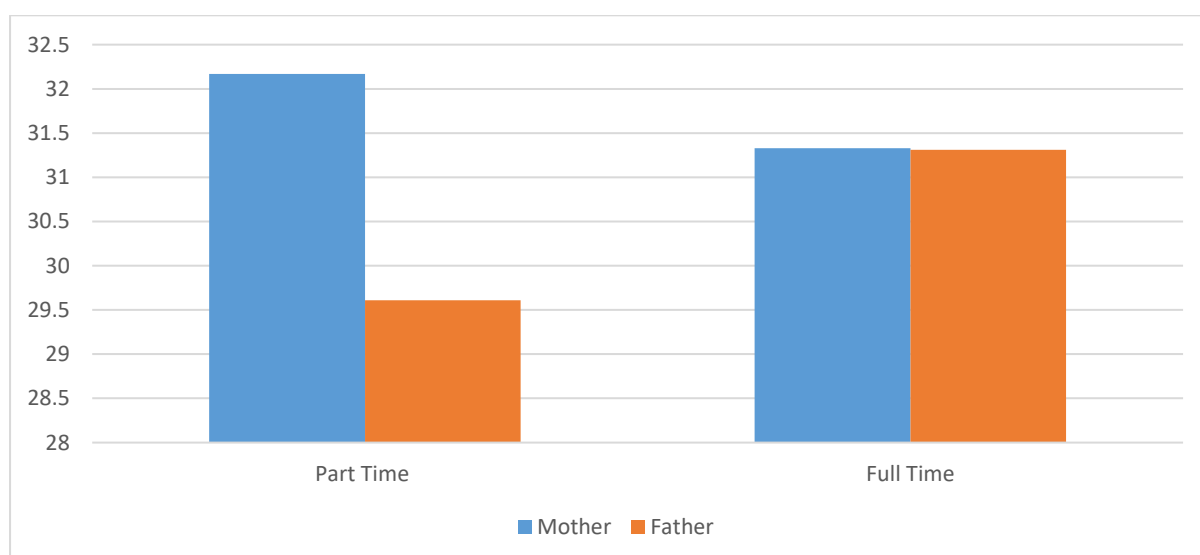
In total, one hundred and one participants completed the online vignette. Regrettably, when the sample was analysed the sample was reduced to eighty-two, due to partial participant completion, which created incomplete cells resulting in unusable data. The gender demographics of the sample are presented in Graph 1 and it is observable that there was a gender dominance of male participants within the sample, 64 men to 33 women, with 4 participants who did not specify their gender. Any potential impact of this gender imbalance would be tested in the multivariate between-subjects ANCOVA testing to establish if there was any significant impact upon the results.



**Figure 1 – Gender Demographics of Sample**

## Descriptive Statistics

It is useful to initially consult the descriptive statistics to observe any dominant characteristics of the data before embarking on a more detailed analysis (McCann, et al, 2015). To this end, the descriptive statistics were manually tallied to establish if any key differences are observable between the overall ratings of all four applicant vignettes (see figure 2 below). Full details of the descriptive statistics are available in appendix 4.



**Figure 2 - Descriptive Statistics Comparing Overall Mean Ratings for Four Conditions**

Figure 2 indicates that the caregiving father applicant for the part-time position depicted in the vignette obtained a lower overall mean rating than the mother applicant for the part-time position. The part-time father applicant had a mean rating of 29.61 out of 40 compared to the part-time mother applicant mean rating of 32.17.

It was also observable from the overall mean descriptive statistics that the rating for the part-time father (representing a caregiving father) was lower than the full-time mother as well as the full-time father applicant who obtained overall mean ratings of 31.98 and 31.31 retrospectively. It is important to highlight that these results were not tested for statistical significance at this point as statistical significance is explored through the ANCOVA analysis later in this chapter.

Through consulting more detailed descriptive statistics (see Table 1 below) it is apparent that the caregiving father represented as part-time father applicant was rated lower on each dependent variable (DV) ('workplace commitment', 'promotability', 'hireability', 'perceived competence') than the part-time mother applicant and both mother and father applicants for the full-time role, with the greatest disparity being evident with regard to the variable of 'perceived competence'.

DV	N	IV-PT				IV-FT			
		Father N=82		Mother N=82		Father N=82		Mother N=82	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Prom	82	6.94	1.58	7.49	1.59	7.78	1.35	7.87	1.14
Hire	82	7.76	1.09	8.49	1.19	7.77	1.27	8.07	0.96
WC	82	7.46	1.32	7.73	1.63	7.94	1.29	8.16	1.13
PC	82	7.44	1.11	8.46	1.17	7.82	1.16	7.88	1.06
Total		29.6	5.277	32.17	3.92	31.31	4.57	31.98	4.706

**Table 1- Detailed Descriptive Statistics- Mean Scores and Standard Deviation**

**for Mothers and Fathers on Four Variables, Part-Time and Full-Time**

**Prom=Promotability; Hire=Hireability;WC= Workplace Comitment; PC=Perceived Competence**

These early descriptive statistics are indicative of differences existing in the way in which a caregiving father is rated when applying for a part-time role when compared to a mother applicant for a part-time role and parent applicants for a full-time role which warrants further exploration to establish if any statistical significance exists.

## **Power**

Before presenting the results of the statistical analysis it is necessary to establish the feasibility of obtaining statistical significance with a reduced sample of eighty-two participants (due to the incomplete data) and this can be achieved through power analysis. Power analysis is the ability of a test to detect an effect of that size (Field, 2009) and can be seen to have an important role in quantitative research (Sun, Pan, and Wang, 2011). It enables researchers to establish the extent to which it is possible to assume that the population effect size is exactly equal to the effect size observed in the current sample (O'Keefe, 2017). Within SPSS power is recorded as 'observed power' and analysis of it ensures the power is of an acceptable level to support the validity of the study (Sun et al, 2011). Field (2009) advises researchers should aim to achieve a power of 0.8, which indicates an 80% chance of detecting an effect if one genuinely exists, with 1 being the highest. As is evident in Tables 4 and 5 (see below), the observed power in the multivariate tests was 1.0 for the within-subjects test and 1.0 and 0.98 for the between-subjects test which are all above 0.80 threshold, thus indicating the validity of the analysis was confidently established despite the relatively low sample size.

## Why ANCOVA?

When deciding on the choice of analysis an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was initially considered as this is a method in which conditions can be compared. However, an ANOVA does not provide information about the specific groups that are affected and would not have provided the full information on the impact of 'Gender of Applicant' and 'Applicant Working Hours' on 'Applicant Ratings'. Therefore, a more detailed Analysis of Co-Variance (ANCOVA) approach was adopted due to its robust nature and as it had previously been utilised in a similar study undertaken by Berdahl and Moon (2013).

After ensuring that all the data was as complete as possible, the SPSS analysis was conducted using the General Linear Model (Field, 2009; Abraham, Hendler, Shapira-Lichter, Kanat-Maymon, Zagoory-Sharon and Feldman, 2014) with the co-variables of 'Gender of Applicant' (mother/father) and 'Applicant Working Hours' (part-time/full-time), and dependent variables of 'Applicant Ratings' on the basis of 'workplace commitment', 'hireability', 'promotability' and 'perceived competence'. Its purpose was to explore if there were any significant relationships between the co-variables and 'Applicant Ratings' and to enable this there were four conditions:

- Full-Time Mother Applicant
- Full-Time Father Applicant
- Part-Time Father Applicant
- Part-Time Mother Applicant

Multivariate analysis was undertaken utilising both between-subjects and within-subjects tests to assess the effect of the 'Gender of Applicant', 'Applicant Working Hours', and any interaction effects, with effect sizes evaluated using the partial eta-squared statistic (McCann et al, 2015).

All of the assumptions required for use of the ANCOVA test were considered to be met. With regard to the homogeneity of variance, Levene's Test was employed to test the levels of variance, essentially, "the absolute difference between each score and the mean of the group from which it came" (Glass, 1966; and Field, 2009; 150), (Table 2) and illustrated that the ANCOVA test is therefore reliable. This conclusion is drawn as the test requires a significance level of  $p = > 0.05$  and this was evident for each of the dependant variables in each of the conditions.

	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Promotability-Part-Time Father	.417	1	80	.520
Promotability-Full-Time Father	.230	1	80	.633
Promotability-Part-Time Mother	3.035	1	80	.085
Promotability-Full-Time Mother	.304	1	80	.583
Hireability-Part-Time Father	1.711	1	80	.195
Hireability-Full-Time Father	.366	1	80	.547
Hireability-Part-Time Mother	.289	1	80	.592
Hireability-Full-Time Mother	.006	1	80	.937
Workplace Commitment –Part-Time Father	.026	1	80	.872
Workplace Commitment-Full-Time Father	1.136	1	80	.290
Workplace Commitment-Part-Time Mother	.516	1	80	.475
Workplace Commitment–Full-Time Mother	.000	1	80	.998
Perceived Competence–Part-Time Father	.677	1	80	.413
Perceived Competence-Full-Time Father	.084	1	80	.773
Perceived Competence –Part-Time Mother	.521	1	80	.473
Perceived Competence-Full-Time Mother	1.564	1	80	.215

**Table 2 - Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance**

It is appropriate to note that Levene's test does not take into account the co-variances (Field, 2009) as these are considered to be key to this study, Box's M test was employed which is commonly utilised in this circumstance to test the equality of the covariance (Miller, Neal, Roberts, Baer, Cressler, Metrik, and Marlatt, 2002). The Box's M test demonstrated a significance level of 0.000, (See Table 3) further supporting the appropriateness of the choice of ANCOVA.



<b>Box's M</b>	<b>460.438</b>
F	2.481
df1	136
df2	8038.436
Sig.	.000

**Table 3 - Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices**

The normality of distribution was not tested as it is assumed that the population is normally distributed due to the sample size. It is suggested that with samples over 30, even if a violation existed, it would not result in major complications (Pallant, 2011).

### **Multivariate Test**

Multivariate testing, in its very literal sense, means many variables (Field, 2009) which is appropriate for this study, which is exploring numerous variables. This analysis utilises the Wilks' Lambda test (Field, 2009) as a mechanism of measuring the significance of the differences between the means of groups of subjects on a combination of dependent variables ('Applicant Ratings' against each dependent variable) and directly measures the proportion of variance in the combination of dependent variables that is unaccounted for by the independent variable (full-time mother applicant, full-time father applicant, part-time father applicant, part-time mother applicant). According to Wilks' Lambda, any value of differences less than 0.05 it is considered to be significant.

This analysis is inherently within-subjects as all participants rated all four vignettes, however, the researcher was keen to establish initially through a between-subject test if there was a relationship between 'Gender of Participant' (Male/Female), 'Gender of Applicant' (mother/father) and 'Applicant Working Hours' (part-time/full-time) in a more general sense before embarking on the within-subject analysis. With the aim of establishing if the predominance of male participants that emerged in the descriptive statistics would have a significant impact on the results.

### **Between-Subjects Test**

The between-subjects analysis (Table 4 below) within the multivariate test highlighted that whilst there was a significant interaction between the 'Gender of Applicant' (mother/father) and 'Applicant Working Hours' (full-time/part-time) ( $F(4,77) = 1963.9$ ,  $P = .0.00$ ), 'Gender of Participant' undertaking the online vignette was not significant, ( $F(4,77) = 1.564$ ,  $p = 0.192$ ). This result provides confidence that the analysis was not skewed by the dominance of male participants.

Between-Subjects	Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power <sup>c</sup>
Wilks Lambda	Intercept (Applicant Gender/ Work Hrs)	0.10	1963.998 <sup>b</sup>	4.00	77.000	0.000	.990	7855.992	1.000
	Gender_1 (Participant Gender)	.925	1.564 <sup>b</sup>	4.00	77.000	.192	6.258	.462	0.925

a. Design: Intercept + Gender\_1 Within Subjects Design: Gen + Empl + Gen \* Empl

**Table 4 - Multivariate Between-Subjects**

### Within-Subject Test

With confidence in the sample established through the between-subject test, within-subject multivariate tests were undertaken to explore the data from the viewpoint of all participants undertaking the same task. As can be observed from Table 5 below, the within-subject test exposed two significant differences in the means that are central to this study. Firstly, statistical significance was found in the differences between the means of 'Gen' which refers to the 'Gender of Applicant' (mother/father) and 'Applicant Ratings' ( $F(4, 77) = 10.019$ ,  $P=0.00$ ). Secondly, a significant difference can be observed with regard to 'Employ' which refers to the 'Applicant Working Hours' (whether part-time or full-time) and the 'Applicant Ratings' ( $F(4, 77) = 6.460$ ,  $P=0.00$ ). This suggests that mothers and fathers are rated differently when applying for part-time and full-time roles, with 'Gender of Applicant' (mother/father) and 'Applicant

Working Hours' they wish to undertake (working full-time or part-time) affecting how they are rated. With this established, to fully address the research question which pertains to this part of the data it is necessary to delve more deeply into the analysis to explore the 'Applicant Ratings' against the specific measures of 'promotability', 'hireability', 'workplace commitment' and 'perceived competence' through exploration of the estimated marginal means (EMM) section of the SPSS output which can be useful in determining the nature of the established interaction (Field, 2009).

Between Subjects	Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power <sup>c</sup>
Wilks Lambda	Gen (Applicant Gender-M/F)	.658	10.019 <sup>b</sup>	4.000	77.000	.000	.342	40.076	1.000
	Employ (Applicant Working Hours-PT/FT)	.749	6.460 <sup>b</sup>	4.000	77.000	.000	.251	25.838	.987

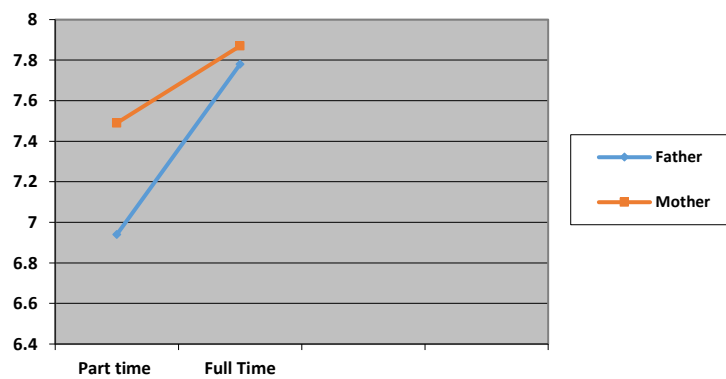
**Table 5 - Multivariate Within-Subjects**

### **Estimated Marginal Means (EMM)**

The EMM outlines estimations of what the mean would be when taking into consideration all of the variables in the model and this section will explore each dependent variable in turn ('promotability', 'hireability', 'workplace commitment' and 'perceived competence'). Differences in profile plots are highlighted to establish in detail how the caregiving father applicant is rated when they apply for a part-time role

and how this compares to the ratings for mothers who are applying for a part-time role and full-time parent applicants.

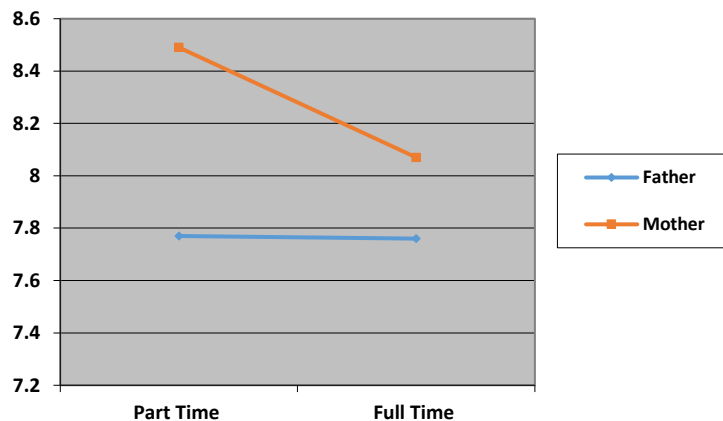
### **‘Promotability’**



**Figure 3 - EMM ‘Promotability’ Rating**

As discussed earlier in this chapter, participants were asked to rate the fictitious applicant vignettes on the basis of a number of dependent variables, the first being ‘promotability’, as illustrated in (Figure 3). It is apparent from the analysis that the part-time father applicant was rated the lowest out of all four conditions. The effect was present for both full-time and part-time parent applicants, with the strongest effect being observable for the part-time applicants.

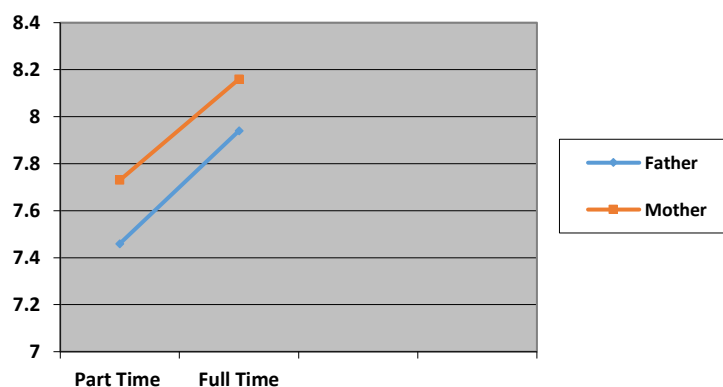
## ‘Hireability’



**Figure 4 - EMM ‘Hireability’ Ratings**

The analysis of the data regarding the dependent variable of ‘hireability’ shows in figure 4 a slightly different pattern to that of ‘promotability’. Whilst the part-time father was still rated lower than the part-time and full-time mother with regard to ‘hireability’, there was only a slight difference between ratings of ‘hireability’ for the part-time and full-time father.

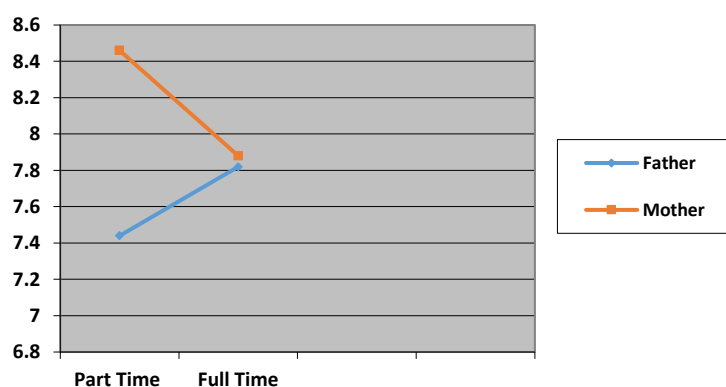
## ‘Workplace Commitment’



**Figure 5 - EMM ‘Workplace Commitment’ Ratings**

The analysis of the dependent variable of 'workplace commitment' (Figure 5) demonstrates that the caregiving fathers applicant, represented as a part-time applicant was again the lowest rated of all of the applicants. It is observable that both full-time applicants scored more highly than their part-time counterparts with regard to 'workplace commitment'.

### **'Perceived Competence'**



**Figure 6 - EMM 'Perceived Competence' Ratings**

The last dependant variable against which participants rated fictitious applicant vignettes was 'perceived competence'. It is observable in figure 6 that the caregiving father applicant depicted as a part-time father applicant obtained the lowest score with the greatest disparity between scores between the part-time mother and the part-time father applicant, with a more marginal difference between the rating of 'perceived competence' between the full-time mother and father applicant being observable.

## Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the quantitative data obtained through the online vignette with manager participants addressing research question one which asks 'How are caregiving fathers rated when applying for working arrangements which facilitate an active role in caregiving?'

The initial descriptive statistics demonstrated a non-statistical difference in the overall mean ratings between the caregiving father who was applying for a part-time role, a mother who was applying for a part-time role and male and female parent applicants for a full-time role. The descriptive statistics indicated that the caregiving father, depicted in the vignette as a part-time father, was rated lower than the part-time mother applicant and the full-time parent applicants across all dependent variables ('workplace commitment', 'hireability', 'promotability', 'perceived competence'). The strongest effect evident from the non-statistical descriptive statistics was with regard to 'perceived competence'. The more detailed descriptive statistics, which explored the dependent variables in turn, demonstrated a similar, non-statistically significant pattern, with the part-time father applicant scoring lower than all other applicants, with a more marginal difference evident for the dependent variable of 'hireability'.

The chapter then presented the data, which emerged from the ANCOVA tests, utilising multivariate analysis. Initially, a between-subject analysis was conducted to ascertain if a significant interaction between the 'Gender of Applicant' (mother/father) and 'Applicant Working Hours' (part-time/full-time) existed in a more general sense and if there was a relationship between 'Applicant Ratings' and 'Gender of



Participant'. This test found that there was a significant interaction between the 'Gender of Applicant' and the 'Applicant Working Hours', however, the 'Gender of Participant' was non-significant which gave the confidence to move forward with the within-subject testing despite the gender imbalance within the sample. The within-subject test also demonstrated a significant interaction between 'Gender of Applicant' (mother/father) and 'Applicant Working Hours' (part-time/ full-time). Similarly, the within-subject test demonstrated a significant relationship between 'Gender of Applicant', 'Applicant Working Hours' and 'Applicant Ratings', indicating that whether an applicant was a mother or a father and whether they were applying for a full-time or part-time role would affect how they are rated.

The chapter then presented the estimated marginal means (EMM), presenting each dependent variable at a time. The EMM demonstrated that for each of the dependent variables ('promotability', 'hireability', 'workplace commitment' and 'perceived competence'), the caregiving father, represented as a part-time applicant obtained the lowest rating, although the extent of this varied, a lower score was consistent.

In summary, from the data presented in this chapter, there are numerous inferences that can be made and many points for wider discussion, which naturally follows within the discussion in chapter nine. The data arising from the online vignette points to a difference in the rating of a caregiving father, represented as a father applying for a part-time role compared to the ratings of a mother applying for a part-time role and parent applicants for a full-time role, directly addressing research question one. Nevertheless, this data does not tell us about the nature and rationale for this decision-making. To this end, the presentation of data will now move to deploy

qualitative insights which allow for deeper exploration of the ratings above to address research questions two and three, uncovering what might lie behind the discriminatory choices that managers made in the experimental design above and how such perceptions of caregiving fathers might have a part to play in the dominance of the breadwinner model. This will be achieved through discussions of the data from manager vignette based focus groups and semi-structured interviews with working parents and managers with the ultimate aim of offering further insights into the experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers in contemporary employment.

## **Chapter Seven - Qualitative Results**

### **Insights into the Experiences and Perceptions of Caregiving Fathers from Interview and Focus Group data**

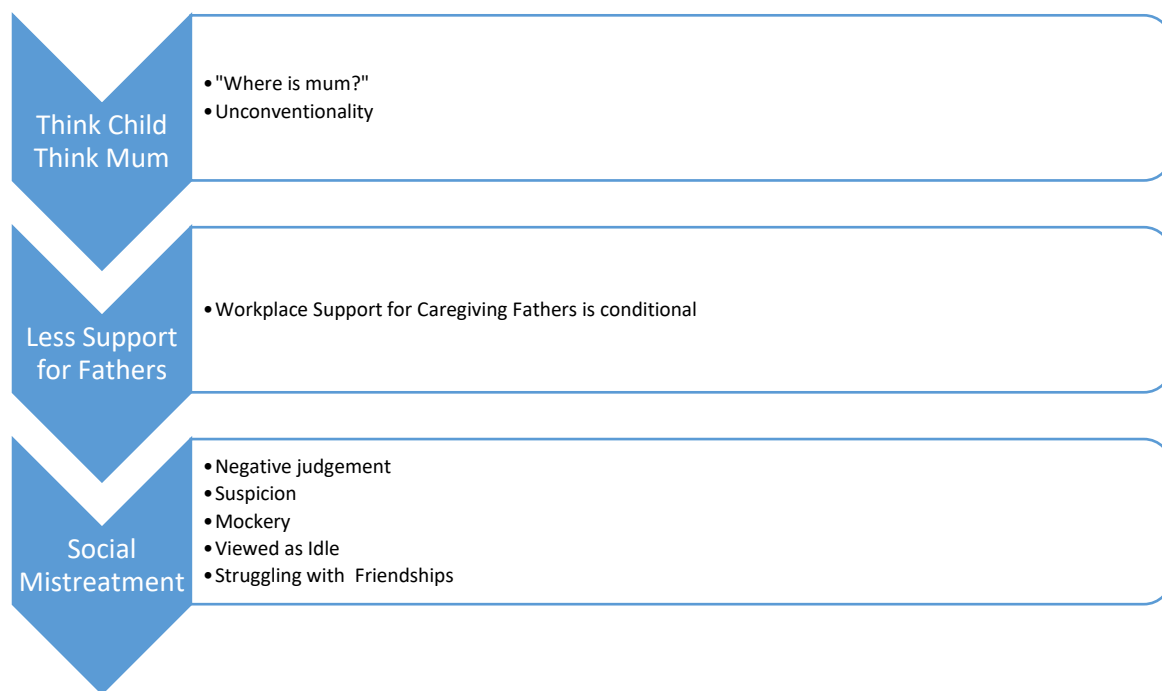
In the previous chapter data arising from the online vignette posited that a caregiving father, represented as an applicant for a part-time role, was rated lower by managers at the point of shortlisting than a mother applying for a part-time role and full-time parent applicants. This lower rating was demonstrable across all of the dependent variables identified as 'hireability', 'perceived competence', 'workplace commitment' and 'promotability'. The quantitative data suggested that across all four scenarios of part-time mother and father and full-time mother and father, the part-time, caregiving father applicant was consistently rated the lowest against each variable. Whilst this is interesting, wider exploration is necessary to understand why this might have occurred and to this end, qualitative data has been obtained and will be presented in this chapter. The qualitative data is focused on addressing Research question two and three:

- Research question two-To understand the ratings awarded to caregiving fathers using focus groups and interviews
- Research question three- What explanations can be offered for the continued dominance of fathers as the family breadwinners?

In this chapter qualitative data gathered through vignette-based focus groups, semi-structured interviews with managers and semi-structured interviews with mothers and

fathers is explored. As outlined in chapters three, four and five, much-existing research in this area has been conducted with student participants in the US, therefore, utilising UK managers and working parents enabled a more appropriate picture of the experiences and perceptions of UK caregiving fathers to be obtained and to explore if this impacts upon the continued dominance of fathers in the role of breadwinner for their families.

As outlined in detail in chapter five, the sample for the qualitative data comprised twenty seven focus group participants (ten female/seventeen male), twenty-one semi-structured interviews with working parents (eleven fathers/ten mothers) and fifteen managers (twelve females/three males). The data presented in this chapter was the result of a four-stage analysis process involving an initial line by line analysis, followed by a data reduction process, preliminary coding and then a final development of key codes (see chapter five for full details). Through this process, insights into the ratings given to caregiving fathers in the online vignette have been gained. Additionally, this provides further insight into the perceptions of caregiving fathers and their experiences, and offers explanation for the continued dominance of fathers in the role of breadwinner for their families. The data has been identified as falling into three main themes: 'Think Child - Think Mum', 'Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving' and 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers' (see Figure 7 below).



**Figure 7- Themes from the Vignette Based Focus Groups and Interviews**

‘Think Child - Think Mum’ is a phrase that has been employed to encompass a phenomenon that occurred widely in the semi-structured interviews, highlighting the assumption that mothers are automatically associated with caregiving rather than a father. This theme has been further divided into two sub-themes that emerged from the data. This is to allow a deeper probe into the nature of the ‘Think Child - Think Mum’ concept. The two sub-themes are: “Where is Mum?” and ‘Unconventionality’. “Where is Mum?” refers to a phrase that was used by many of the participants, both managers and working parents. For example, if a father attends an appointment with a child, their belief was their presence would be questioned and they would routinely be asked “Where is Mum?”, the assumption being that the father was in some way a secondary parent. Similarly, managers and parents frequently commented that a caregiving father is considered to be ‘unconventional’. For example, if a child becomes unwell at school there appears to be an expectation that a mother will leave

her workplace to collect the child. However, if a father collects the child, this emerged as being viewed as 'unconventional', moving away from stereotypical parental norms and this sub-theme is therefore an appropriate way to allow further exploration of this theme.

The notion that 'Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving' was considerable and the differentials in support took varying forms. Due to the amount of data that emerged within this theme, a sub-theme was created entitled 'Workplace Support for Caregiving Fathers is Conditional' to explore the notion that any support for caregiving fathers is subject to negotiation and contingent on circumstances, in a way that support for mothers is not.

The final theme that is presented within this study is the concept of the 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers', which is a term that has been described as "being teased, put down, or excluded by co-workers" (Berdahl and Moon, 2013; 343). Examples of the 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving' emerged largely in the semi-structured interviews with working parents, many participants expressed that they faced such mistreatment as they attempted to combine caregiving responsibilities with working outside of the home. This took varying forms, each of which has been classified into sub-themes. The first sub-theme within the theme of the 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers' explores caregiving fathers facing 'Negative Judgements' in the workplace, whilst the second sub-theme discusses the concept of caregiving fathers being viewed with 'Suspicion', both in the workplace and socially. The third sub-theme explores the 'Mockery' faced by caregiving fathers and the fourth sub-theme charts the 'Struggle with friendship' issues encountered by

caregiving fathers. The fifth and final sub-theme explores the many statements that were made during the semi-structured interviews which suggest that when fathers undertake caregiving responsibilities it is often construed as being due to an inherent reluctance to work and that they are 'Viewed as Idle' as opposed to having a desire to partake in family life.

The qualitative data from the vignette based focus groups, manager interviews and working parents have been merged to permit an in-depth exploration of each theme and the data that aligns with it. This was believed to be common practice within qualitative research and had the benefit of making the data more manageable and enabling the data to be aligned to the research questions (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; and Hewitt-Taylor, 2001)

Each theme will now be presented in turn, with direct quotes from participants used to illustrate them shown in italics. The names of participants have been changed to maintain anonymity, however, for the purposes of clarity their parental status, marital status, number of children and job role is accurate (see appendix 5 and 6 for full details).

### **Theme 1 - Think Child – Think Mum**

The overarching theme of 'Think Child – Think Mum' emerged in both the vignette based focus groups and semi-structured interviews and due to its prevalence contains two sub-themes entitled "Where's Mum?" and 'Unconventionality'. 'Think Child - Think Mum' refers to a phenomenon whereby the default caregiver for children

is assumed to be the mother, consistent with notions of parental gender role stereotyping. Such stereotyping has been identified in previous research as having a detrimental effect on mothers in the workplace (Correll and Ridgeway, 2006; Correll et al. 2007) and more recently, also on fathers when they act in a non-stereotypical manner and undertake caregiving activities (Berdahl and Moon, 2013). The data from this study can be observed to support these findings.

The theme of 'Think Child – Think Mum' was widely evident within the data with many participants making statements that demonstrated more traditional beliefs about parental behaviour, and, specifically, associating parental responsibilities with mothers but not fathers. When managers discussed making recruitment decisions in the semi-structured interviews, the parental responsibilities of mothers appeared to be at the forefront of discussions, as illustrated by Sam, a ward manager, who provided insight into her thought process when she interviewed a mother for a full-time role:

*“We had an older manager who was going for a full-time job. She’s a single mum with a two-year-old and I was very honest with her because I said, ‘This is a full-time job so would you manage that ... there isn’t any leeway in terms of you know, breaking down to three days or four days; this is a full-time job on a ward, really busy.’”*

She continued, that if she was interviewing a father her thought process would be different and, when asked if she would have the same concerns about recruiting a father, the response was - *“No, not so much. No.”*. This illustrates how mothers are



associated with children in a way that fathers are not to the same degree. She continued:

*"I've appointed lots of young people and you know whatever, who might not have children and stuff like that but if you've got somebody who's over childbearing age you go, 'phew, well they're not going to go off on maternity leave'."*

This was echoed by Amy, a cancer nurse team leader who stated that when recruiting a mother for a full-time position, her family circumstances would be a point of discussion:

*"I think in their heads they would be having an internal discussion with themselves about how's this going to work ... who else is around to care? So, I think you'd ... there'd be a kind of ... maybe trying to pick up a few cues about the arrangements but obviously, that can't be discussed so I think I would be thinking, 'Okay, that sounds good. I wonder what's happening in the home then. Who picks up the pieces?' But I don't think you can really ask that so a little bit of informal."*

Whereas, when asked if similar internal debates about managing caregiving responsibilities would occur for fathers the response, as with Sam, was, "No. No". Similarly, Jenny, a HR and operations manager, stated:

*“Women are seen as the caregivers aren't they? So if there's anything that comes to children, it will be the mother that will have to sort things out. ... day to day perceptions are a man will work full-time and won't have family commitments ... if you recruit a woman of a certain age you kind of think they might be at marrying age and once they get married they're gonna have children and if you've got a department of similar age woman some people do have cause for concern. Completely wrong, but I think that this is a factor.”*

Caren, a line manager in the healthcare, supports the notion that fathers are not automatically associated with children in the way that mothers are and illustrates how this manifests itself during the selection process:

*“I don't think you would ever ask a man if he had children at home like a woman ... I don't think anybody ever expects a father to give up time off work to look after the child. It just doesn't happen, does it? It doesn't happen. So, I don't think you would even think about it, and I doubt they ask.”*

This effect is also evident once in employment, as illustrated by Helen, a manager in a recruitment agency who stated:

*“It is most widely acknowledged and accepted that ... mothers in the workplace may have higher absence than other employees because they have got caring responsibilities.”*

Therefore, fathers who are applying for part-time roles to allow for caregiving can be conceptualised as challenging this automatic ‘Think Mum - Think Child’ association which might in part explain the ratings of the caregiving father in the vignette and more specifically with reference to Research Question Three, and explain the continued association of fathers with the role of breadwinner for their families.

Conversations within the vignette based focus groups exploring applicant suitability are also indicative of the centrality of motherhood in this debate, whereas, for men, fatherhood rarely featured as a point of noteworthy discussion. When exploring the suitability of the mother applicants (both part and full-time) the following phrases were commonly used:

- *“She might have been trying to have a baby.”*
- *“She might have been thinking about moving up but then children come along.”*
- *“Her children are young, it must have been hard working full-time.”*
- *“She must have only recently come back to work because the youngest is only six months old.”*

When discussing the suitability of the father applicants (part and full-time), parental status was not discussed in the way it had been for the mother applicants. Instead, debates focused on more general discussions regarding suitability against job criteria, such as:

- *“He has got a degree”; “I saw him as a utility person that is why he is acting now.”*
- *“He is local.”*
- *“He worked in customer services before he became a customer services manager.”*
- *“He is in the place at the moment, he has been there for two years so he has probably got job role experience.”*

Once again, it emerged that for parents in the workplace there appears to be a default association between caregiving and mothers, with discussions on suitability being intertwined with an exploration of issues related to motherhood status, whereas for fathers such an association did not emerge and discussions regarding suitability were focused on job-related criteria. Whilst this can be construed as giving fathers a workplace advantage, in line with conceptualisations of ‘fatherhood benefits’, (Correll et al 2007; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013), this appears to be dependent on the maintenance of a traditional gender ideology through full-time work. For fathers with caregiving responsibilities, this lack of acknowledgement of their role as fathers might explain the lower ratings given to the caregiving father in the online vignette and offer partial account for the minimal presence of fathers in pathways that allow for caregiving, favouring the breadwinning model.

The overarching theme of ‘Think Child - Think Mum’, was also evident in interviews with working parents. Luby, a married mother of two, who works full-time as does her husband, stated if a child was sick: *“it was probably 70/30 the expectation that I would drop everything to look after the children; 30 being my husband”*. This is further

reinforced by David, a father of three who works full-time, as does his wife, who stated: *"If the children are sick, the first call is to Nikki (wife) ... If the school couldn't get hold of her they would call me."*

Stephanie, who has two children and both her and her husband work flexibly stated:

*"I think as a mother you're almost expected ... to have to go when your child is sick ... It never feels that the dads have that, when my husband worked in the bank it was always 'well you will have to do that' and I would say 'well, why I have got to do it, you are the Dad as well.'"*

This automatic assumption that the mother is the primary parent can be conceptualised as presenting a challenge to fathers who have caregiving responsibilities, as highlighted by Paul, a single father of one, who works part-time:

*"When I have told people that I am a single dad, they are like 'you have a child' but I am actually his primary carer ... People still find that a little surprising and I think there is always that assumption ... they think child [and] mother always go together ... when I say I'm his carer people find it a little bit weird, looking for it to be a problem when there was no problem in the first place."*

This is further illustrated by Rick, a father of two who works part-time whilst his wife works full-time, stated:

*“The mother goes to pick the children up from school and the dad works long hours ... and, yes, it primarily was the male, and the female stayed at home for a variety of reasons.”*

He continued that after becoming parents, many of his male friends remained in work on a full-time basis whilst their partners embarked on part-time working as their view was, *“Well, I’m the man so that’s my job”*, which directly addresses research question three, demonstrating rationale for the continued dominance of fathers in the role of breadwinner for their families.

Due to the prevalence of ‘Think Child - Think Mum’, wider exploration is necessary through the use of sub-themes to fully understand why the caregiving father might have obtained lower ratings in the online vignette when compared to the other working parent scenarios and any potential association with the dominance of the breadwinner model. The first of these sub-themes explores the notion that fathers are considered as secondary parents, identified under the heading, “Where is Mum?”

#### “Where is Mum?”

The sub-theme of “Where is Mum?” has been identified as a concept that appeared frequently in both working parent and manager interviews. The phrase can be seen as an enactment of ‘Think Child - Think Mum’, in the circumstances when the assumed primary association between mothers and caregiving is challenged by caregiving fathers, such fathers can expect probes regarding the presence of fathers

and the absence of mothers. Caregiving fathers unanimously gave examples of “Where is Mum” as Paul, a divorced father of one who works part-time explained:

*“If he (my son) had a hospital appointment, it would be like, well, why the Dad is going to the hospital with them?”*

Paul continued that whilst the request for absence for caregiving behaviour would normally be granted, the whereabouts of his son’s mother would be questioned by his manager:

*“I suppose if you have to go you're going to need to go, what about his mother”, that was quite often the question I was asked.”*

It is important to note that whilst such requests for information appear quite innocuous and not necessarily intended to indicate disapproval, some caregiving fathers considered such comments to be more significant. James, a father of two who worked on a part-time basis when his children were younger and is married to a full-time working mother stated:

*“I was often asked ‘Where’s Jacob’s mother?’ things like that. And although they weren’t barbed in any way, I could tell that they were kind of meant to be ... although they were just supposedly innocent questions, I think that there was a bit more of a point to them.”*

Corey, a full-time working father of three in a family where both he and his wife worked full-time also experienced 'Where is Mum?' remarks:

*"It isn't necessarily a big deal but whenever I go anywhere for the kids, plays, school pick-ups that sort of thing, the first thing I am asked is '(mum) couldn't make it?' I am sure they are just making conversation but I find it rude and I don't know what to say really."*

From these comments, it appears that such remarks made by managers and in a more general social context may have a negative impact on fathers. Such a negative impact could potentially create a barrier to fathers undertaking caregiving responsibilities and explain the dominance of the fathers in the role of breadwinner for their families.

It is important to note that the phenomena of "Where is Mum?" did not emerge in interviews with mothers and can be considered as conspicuous by its absence, indicating that the association of caregiving and mothers is presumed and thus the location of the father was not relevant.

The notion of "Where is Mum?" also emerged in the manager interviews. Jon, a HR manager in a naval organisation commented that in their organisation they have some fathers who work part-time, however, questions are raised about the location of the mother; he stated:



*“This is where you see that sort of stereotype you know, where’s the mother? Why are you doing it?”*

Similarly, Sue, a ward manager in the NHS stated that when fathers want to work part-time, the question often asked is, *“Why would you (work part-time) because you’ve got a wife.”* This was further endorsed by Laura, a line manager: *“I still think the response in a lot of the workplaces would be: ‘Well, why can’t your wife do that?’”*

The theme of “Where is Mum?” did not emerge in the focus groups, however, as they were vignette based it would have been unlikely for this to have been explored unless purposefully designed in the vignette. Whilst the examples above denote illustrations of the differences in how men and women perceive their roles and how they are perceived by others, such perceptions also extended to notions of ‘Unconventionality’.

### Unconventionality

As proposed in chapter two, according to the gender stereotyping and role congruity literature those parents that move away from behavioural norms can expect to face sanctions (Chesley, 2011). The concept of ‘Unconventionality’ in this study explores statements made by participants alluding to caregiving fathers as being somewhat different from the ‘norm’.

In interviews with working parents it was widely apparent that parents who challenged gender norms, typically regarding extent of involvement in caregiving responsibilities,

often felt that others perceived their choice to be 'unconventional'. Paul, a divorced father of one who worked part-time, explained that when he told people about his working hours, the standard response was, *"Oh, that's a bit weird, that's a bit odd."* Similarly, James, who worked part-time whilst his wife worked full-time stated:

*"When our eldest son was very young ... she [his wife] was the person that made most of the money and she was sort of was the main breadwinner ... I had to spend a couple of days a week as the kind of stay at home parent ... I think that that was ... seen as a sort of unusual thing ... it was just less normal to see a male parent providing most of the childcare to a young baby ... I think it was something that although not really sneered at and not, like I say, frowned upon, it was probably something that wasn't considered to be quite normal."*

It is plausible that such perceptions of 'Unconventionality', as intimated above, might have an impact on the extent of paternal involvement in caregiving and explain the adherence to the breadwinner model for many UK fathers. The concept of caregiving fathers being viewed as unconventional was described by some participants as originating from childhood experiences. Kelly, a full-time working mother of one with a part-time partner explained her more traditional, breadwinning brothers were critical of the working arrangements of her family as they had adopted a more traditional arrangement as *"their wives have stayed at home, they have provided everything, but that's what they want that's what they have come from, that is what my Mum did."*

This notion of parental norms of behaviour originating from personal childhood experience was also commented on by Tom, a father of two who worked part-time for a period, who is married to a full-time working mother:

*“I think it is something we’ve talked about (both our fathers working full-time and mothers working part-time) and are aware it is something new to us, alien, we hadn’t experienced it so were a kind of a bit cautious, quite a bit ... we thought ‘this is different to what we know’.”*

Similarly, Caitlin, a mother of two who works full-time recounted how her full-time working hours felt ‘unconventional’ to her stay at home husband:

*“My husband has never felt comfortable with me working (and him not) ... I think that is because of what he always knew with his Mum, his Mum was always at home, so that is what he thought mums and dads should do.”*

With this in mind it is clear to see how conceptualisation of ‘Unconventionality’ might emerge if fathers have a different level of caregiving responsibilities than their fathers. This sense of ‘Unconventionality’ was also felt by Caitlin when her children would compare her to other mothers at their school:

*“When they were older and would go to friends’ houses and their mums were there all the time and baked lovely cakes and all this business, then it was “why aren’t you home when we finish school, why can’t you be like that.”*

Such feelings of being 'unconventional' were also believed to come from peers, as expressed by Sam, a mother of two, who works full-time and was married to a stay at home dad:

*"He didn't mix with many other fathers ... He didn't see them at the school gate (they were at work) ... I suppose men at the school gate are a bit strange."*

This was echoed by Sid, a father of four, who is a stay at home dad, is a part-time writer and wife works full-time:

*"Generally the response (when I say I am a stay at home dad) is one of surprise, I feel like I am encroaching on someone else's territory. On passport forms, the mothers come first ... this is just another one of the things ... when I say I am the main one at home for the kids' people will quickly move over the subject, it is such an unusual thing for people to understand ... I see the mums bring kids to schools, they are fabulous and very committed, it is natural ... I suppose I feel a fraud at times ... I have felt it quite profoundly."*

This data suggests that the perceptions of deviating from accepted norms were not limited to caregiving fathers, as mothers who challenged stereotypical gender norms by working full-time could expect similar judgements. Such judgements can be conceptualised as potentially having an implication on the extent of involvement of fathers in caregiving and offer potential explanation for the maintenance of the status quo, with mothers as the primary caregiving and fathers aligned to breadwinning.

Emma, a mother of two who works full-time whilst her partner works part-time, observed that whilst colleagues did not seem to be judgemental about her working full-time, she felt that her choice was viewed as diverging from accepted standards; she stated:

*“When I had my first son, I had to go back to work full-time and, yeah, that certainly raised some eyebrows. I think it wasn’t considered to be particularly the norm ... I think it was far less likely that a mother would go back to work until the children were at school, part-time and certainly not full-time ... people seemed a little bit sort of concerned by it ... they were expecting me to be away from work for longer certainly.”*

Similarly, Laura, a mother of one, felt that her manager assumed she would want to work part-time after the birth of her son: *“I kind of had an informal chat with the founder ... he said look, I know you’ll be wanting to come back part-time.”*

The data is suggestive that parents who challenge gender norms might face perceptions of ‘Unconventionality’ from numerous directions including colleagues, extended family, peer group and within their own families. It is proposed that within this climate, maintenance of the status quo might become a driving force for parental decision-making regarding caregiving and working arrangements.

It is relevant to note that perceptions of ‘Unconventionality’ were not limited to working parents and also emerged strongly in interviews with managers who provided further

evidence that caregiving fathers are sometimes conceptualised as deviating away from traditional assumptions of paternal behaviour. Helen, a manager at a recruitment agency illustrates this:

*"The challenges for fathers are a lot less spoken about, so we do have some fathers who have taken paternity leave and that it itself is quite rare ... he has taken a lot more sick days since he became a parent. We don't treat him any differently but it stands out more because he is a male and he is caring for children which is against the norm almost, it is just assumed that the man will go to work and the woman will stay at home."*

Amy, a cancer nurse team leader supported this notion and outlined that traditional caregiving patterns guide her decision-making as a manager: *"My Mum stayed at home, my Dad went out to work you know so that's the way I've been brought up so no, I think I probably wouldn't have it (a father working part-time)."* This statement can be seen to represent a potential explanation for the ratings of the caregiving father in the online vignette and more generally the dominance of breadwinner model for UK fathers. This is endorsed by Sam, a line manager:

*"We allow women to go off and look after their kids but perhaps not men so much and they might feel that. That actually it is more difficult for them because they are seen, as you know, I am staying here; I am the worker so they have to stay in work and perhaps ... I suspect they probably feel that they do have to stay in work and they can't go off and perhaps they might be looked on differently."*

Clare, an HR manager at a technology company, gives support to this by suggesting a father applying to work part-time would be atypical, thus implying perceptions of being ‘unconventional’:

*“I think it would be quite ... it would be unusual ... we haven’t had any ... Oh, the discussion would be very interesting ... I think it would just throw them if it was a man working part-time because we don’t have any men working part-time ... a bit kind of ‘oh dunno know!’*

Thus far, the evidence presented points to clearly prescribed stereotypes of the mother as a caregiver and anything operating outside of this framework is viewed as unconventional. One such ramification of the automatic alignment of mothers and children is that ‘Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving’ and this is the next substantive theme to be explored.

## **Theme 2 - Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving**

A prominent theme that emerged was a perception that ‘Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving’, which was apparent in interviews with managers and working parents. This theme was not as prominent in the vignette based focus groups, however, as focus group participants were asked to discuss applicant suitability rather than workplace management of parents, this seems understandable. Within this theme a sub-theme has been identified which explores

the data which suggests that workplace support for caregiving fathers is conditional, contingent on circumstances and more negotiable than support for mothers.

This theme begins by presenting the broad theme of 'Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving' by way of explaining the ratings of the caregiving father identified in the quantitative data and offering potential explanations for the continued dominance of fathers in the role of breadwinner for their families. It then moves to explore the sub-theme of 'Workplace Support for Caregiving Fathers is Conditional'.

The view that 'Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving' was a recurrent theme in interviews with managers. Samantha, an HR manager, discussed how differentials in empathy and support for parents emerged with regard to working arrangements that facilitate caregiving. She stated that whilst either parent could apply to their manager for such arrangements the response to that request is often dependent on gender: *"It is viewed differently and maybe not looked at as empathetically ... in the same way as if it was a female."* This view was supported by Sophie, a line manager in the NHS who stated:

*"He (a father) would be looked at differently than a mum ... I think that sometimes it is easier perhaps for people to think of the mum taking time off with maternity leave and all that than the dad and they would be more supportive, intentionally or not ... if the child is sick ... it tends to affect the women more than the men, in fact, I can't really think of a time when I have seen any of my male colleagues have to stay home."*



Jon, an HR manager in a Naval organisation also observed differentials in parental support in his workplace dependant on gender, for mothers he believes his organisation is supportive; he explained that *“there are policies for working mothers and a whole range of agreements arranged locally ... we accommodate it for maternal parents we let them park nearby, simple things like that”*, however, when it comes to fathers he stated, *“we could do more.”*

A slightly different view was proposed by Simone, a university HR manager, who believed that whilst the phenomena of less support for fathers exists, it is dependent on the gender of the colleague, with females believed to be supportive of both parents with caregiving responsibilities in the workplace; however, *“Other males in the workplace [are] perhaps not so forgiving”*. Clare, a HR manager working in technology proposed that support for mothers in the workplace extends beyond their role as a parent and also includes workplace expectations of performance, suggesting that *“I suppose maybe they (working mums) are given a bit more leeway because they are working mums and people expect things to be delayed”*. The implication being that fathers are not afforded the same ‘leeway’ as mothers.

The interviews with working parents provided further insights regarding disparities in the workplace support afforded to caregiving fathers, with comments made regarding the reduced level of support for caregiving fathers. Paul, a single father of one who works part-time, believed that *“comparing it (the level of support) with a colleague who was a female, I would say I had slightly less support”*.

This was also echoed by Emma who is married, works full-time and has two children. She believes that for mothers:

*“Informally there is that sort of support network there, that sort of invisible support network amongst mothers that just kind of know what it is like to have to juggle an awful lot”.*

Similarly, Sue, a full-time working mother of two with a husband who works part-time, believes that *“women probably are in a better position than ... in terms of the culture and how people accept that.”* She continues:

*“I think there's probably some different pressure for the father from a personal perspective around requesting that time. As to how that would be viewed, so whether that's because of what's happened or whether it's belief there's an internal conflict around doing that, around how they feel that that's viewed and whether that's lived out or not is different because sometimes people don't ask because they have a belief.”*

Differentials in support for parents appeared to come to the forefront with regard to the extent to which flexibility in the workplace is offered to parents with caregiving responsibilities, specifically with regard to flexibility when children were sick or had appointments during work hours. Sam, a line manager believes that even though policies with regard to flexibility exist in her organisation for both parents, the reality is more complex and that *“... we probably are more flexible with them (mothers) I imagine than we would be with men”.*

Similarly, Clare, a HR manager, stated, *“I think we would treat a mother who works part-time the same as a father”* however, she believes the management response to fathers would differ from mothers, in particular she believes that for a mother, managers would *“worry more about providing flexibility”*, than they would for a father, implying that it might be more challenging for fathers to work flexibly as this is not expected to be required in the same way that it is for mothers.

Working mothers interviewed in this research widely endorsed the existence of informal workplace flexibility for their role as a parent. Stephanie, a married mother of two who works flexibly stated that she feels confident that:

*“If I’ve got little un’s Christmas play that I need two or three hours [away from work] that I know that I’ve got two or three hours that I can take and nobody’s going to question me on that.”*

This was similar to the experience of Lyn, a mother of two in a family in which both parents work full-time stated she has *“always had supportive colleagues, who have never made me feel guilty if I have had to take any time off because the children were sick.”*

Examples of such workplace flexibility were lacking in the interviews with working fathers, which might be conspicuous in its absence and certainly offers scope for more detailed study, particularly in regard to the rationale for the apparent lack of flexibility for caregiving fathers. It was proposed by David, a father of three, who works

full-time whilst his wife works part-time that fathers do have less workplace flexibility but that this was rooted in economic rationality than rather attitudinal barriers. He explained;

*“I have no real flexibility, if it was more flexible that would be good, the thing is if I take time off work I am paid by the hour so If I don’t work ... It’s a tricky one really, It would be nice to come and pick the kids up sometimes but then that’s you know losing my hourly rate versus my wife’s.”*

It is important to acknowledge that the notion of fathers obtaining less support for caregiving is contrary to some pre-existing literature, which espouses that fathers get disproportionate praise for caregiving behaviour (Hochschild, 1989, Deutsch and Saxon, 1998). Whilst this view was not largely substantiated in this study, Laura, a team manager stated:

*“there is a view ... well done you because you babysat ... I still think there is that, you know, you went over and above because, you know, you went to sports day.”*

The data was not unanimous in demonstrating a lack of support for caregiving fathers in the workplace and some examples of support and flexibility for fathers were evident; however, it was observed that such support appeared to be conditional, in a way that support for mothers is not. Workplace support for fathers was observed to occur in a context of negotiation and be dependent on the circumstances of the father

and quite often the absence of the mother and this is explored within the next sub-theme.

### Workplace Support for Caregiving Fathers is Conditional

It was apparent in both manager and working parent interviews that 'Workplace Support for Caregiving Fathers was Conditional' and that its provision was contingent on circumstances in a way that it was not for working mothers. In over half of the manager interviews, respondents referred to the notion of fathers negotiating with line managers when they needed to take unexpected leave for caregiving whereas for mothers such negotiations did not occur. Amy, a cancer nurse team leader, stated:

*"(fathers are) almost waiting to be given permission ... I get the feeling that (for mothers) it's not a negotiation, it's just "we've got to go"; (fathers) don't expect to be let off as easily ... it's almost assumed by the women that that's what happens you know? They have to go straight away whereas I think the men I work with seem to make more of a story about it."*

In the interviews, working parents (predominantly fathers) widely endorsed this concept of negotiation for fathers in the workplace. Paul, a divorced father of one who worked part-time outlined the concept in more detail:

*"(For mothers) it was almost like we don't want to know the reasons why you need to be off, but you can have the time off ... it almost like we don't want to know too much because you're the mother. Whereas if I went ... they weren't*

*so forgiving in terms of always giving me time off. Sometimes it was quite a battle to try to get that time off ... I would say, well, you know, I'll see if my Mum's free ... but primarily it was me wanting to go and to pick him up and to make sure he was okay and you know, after a few questions they would then let me go ... the first question I would get is 'is there nobody else that can have him, could I ring family, could I ring friends.'*"

Paul continued to give an example of when he has tried to make adjustments to his working pattern to enable him to continue to pick up his son from school:

*"There was an instance when my contract was being adjusted and it was suggested I make myself more available than I had been. As my contract gave me Tuesdays off, I was regularly doing the school run. However, the new management wanted me to work half a day with no exception. At first, I was concerned that my only day to do the school run would be affected. That being said, I did make an offer that I do my shift after the school run, and before the school pick up. They did agree - eventually, but only after I had to fully justify it, I don't think they would have done that to a mother, I think I would have had more support."*

Dave, a line manager in a naval environment describes the process when a father needs to leave work for caregiving, illustrating a scenario reminiscent of negotiation. He stated that *'There are some people (fathers), yeah, on agreement they leave early, yeah, they've agreed, they'll talk to their line manager and arrange to go'*. Corey, a father of three in a family in which both parents work full-time, also implied

a negotiation was necessary if he needed to pick up his children, and whilst he stated that “*I can normally go*”, he continued that his manager “*will always make such a fuss it is normally easier if my wife gets them*”. Such negotiations can be seen to potentially act as a barrier for caregiving fathers undertaking caregiving responsibilities, potentially leading to the maintenance of the ‘status quo’ of ‘Think Child - Think Mum’ as identified earlier in this chapter. Negotiation was also part of the routine for David, a working father of three whose wife also works full-time, when one of his children is sick, he explained:

*“If Nikki was in the middle of shift ... I’d probably come home ... I’d negotiate it ... there are some people who on agreement they leave early ... should their spouse not be able to pick them up and they have agreed, they’ll talk to their manager.”*

This example illustrates that the experiences of some fathers is that support can be obtained, but it requires negotiation and in this case is contingent on the absence of the mother, with agreement dependent on establishing the location and unavailability of the mother.

The notion of contingency dependent on the presence of the mother was a common theme throughout the focus groups and interviews, and in the event of a father being single or taking the ‘lead at-home role’ the disparity between the level of support appeared to be minimised. Once a father had established themselves as single or having the ‘lead home role’, both manager and working parent interviewee's provided examples of more support being afforded to these individuals.

In the vignette based focus groups, when discussing the merits of each fictitious applicant, the status at home was discussed as relevant. A team manager in the charity focus group stated that parents in the workplace should be treated the same if they are "*both taking the home lead role*". This quote implies if the parents in the online vignette had not both been taking the lead role, for example, if that father had a wife who worked part-time, there might be a disparity in the level of support offered for caregiving responsibilities. Similarly, in the focus group in the naval organisation, a section manager stated: "*both of them (applicants for a full-time job) were probably the main breadwinners for the family so I didn't really see any difference*". As before, the implication being that if they were not taking the lead role at home then the position might be different.

In the interviews with managers, this phenomenon was more apparent and once again the amount of support for fathers appeared to be closely related to the presence or absence of the mother. Amy, a team manager stated: "*If my male colleague was a single parent, I'd probably be exactly the same (supportive)*". Laura, a team manager believed that a father in the workplace could not expect to be given support in his parental role "*unless they said they were a single parent or if they implied that their partner was ill.*" She continued that if they were in a situation whereby "*they may have no one to support them, they may have sole responsibility for the children*", then they could expect the same support received by working mothers. Sam, a line manager, expressed a similar view and explained that parental status would not be a factor for a father during the selection process unless "*it had been a single father and he'd said 'I've got a young child'*". Such statements seem to imply that it is the



absence of the mother that determines the level of support received by the father, rather than fatherhood status in its own right.

On some occasions, the scrutiny regarding family circumstances appeared to go even deeper, with Jon, a HR manager in a naval organisation depicting a situation where a father needed to pick his child up from school a few days a week and the decision to allow this involved the HR team considering: *“Do they believe him? Is he credible? Is there a sharing order?”* The implication being that if a sharing order did not exist and he was not deemed to be credible, workplace support would not be granted. Whilst Jon’s example did not mention the differing reactions to mothers in the workplace, the previous data is indicative that a mother would be unlikely to face such scrutiny.

Once a status as a ‘single father’ or taking the ‘home lead role’ has been established it appeared that working fathers might be in a position of advantage over working mothers and obtain wider workplace support. According to Lois, a line manager in the NHS, once it is established that if a father had *“no one to support them, they may have sole responsibility for the children”* then they could actually expect more support than mothers, which aligns with the ‘fatherhood benefit’ literature discussed in chapter four. She explained:

*“It is more unusual to be a father that is responsible for children solely in the workplace perhaps. People, especially if you work with women, might be more empathetic about it, because it is maybe more unusual so we will make more allowances again in terms of the annual leave booking etc.”*

This theme has outlined how ‘Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving’, ranging from the level of empathy expressed, to more practical levels of support, such as the extent of flexibility offered. This theme explored the contingent nature of any support received and it was proposed that workplace support for mothers is less conditional. It is pertinent to note that the data in this theme is indicative of an issue beyond that of equality for parents, with caregiving fathers appearing to receive negative treatment in relation to caregiving behaviour, rather than simply less favourable treatment. This leads to the presentation of the third and final theme, the ‘Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers’.

### **Theme 3 – Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers**

The data from the vignette-based focus groups and the semi-structured interviews consistently demonstrated that caregiving fathers face mistreatment in a social setting. The phrase ‘Social Mistreatment’ builds upon the definition of social mistreatment as identified by Berdahl and Moon (2013; 343), which described the stigma faced by caregiving fathers, as *“being teased, put down or excluded by co-workers”*. This theme initially explores social mistreatment in generic terms, exploring the negative judgements made about caregiving fathers in various forms, observed most prominently in the interviews with working parents and the vignette based focus groups with managers. It then explores four sub-themes, identified on the basis of frequency and perceived importance expressed by the participants; caregiving fathers face ‘Negative Judgement’, ‘Suspicion’, ‘Mockery’, ‘Struggling with Friendships’ and are ‘Viewed as Idle’.

## Negative Judgement

'Negative judgement' towards caregiving fathers emerged specifically, with regard to fathers who wished to work part-time, rather than more casual flexibility, which was a consequence of the questioning arising from the online vignettes. 'Negative judgement' towards caregiving fathers were widely apparent in both the vignette based focus groups with managers and the interviews with working parents and to a lesser degree the interviews with managers.

James, who has two children and worked part-time whilst his children were pre-school age expressed that, "*People could be fairly judgemental or at least seemed to be fairly judgemental about the working arrangement.*" Similarly, Kelly, a full-time working mother of one felt her partner who worked part-time was judged due to his working hours by her family, whom she believed were; "*Disparaging about it - both my brothers are very, very, successful. They're very wealthy they would just fit all those kind of "white male powerful criteria."*

Sid, father of four and part-time writer recounted many examples of negative judgements being directed at him, these included:

*"When people associate childcare with me it isn't a job ... the assumption is that it is a comedown and I can't get a proper job".*

He continued with a very poignant example of the negative treatment he received:

*"I wrote to the school about some concerns I had and asked for a meeting, they never got back to me, so I asked to meet with the governors and their view was very much 'there there little boy, you are just a dad who looks after your kids, you are not a proper person, you are not an upstanding citizen.'"*

Such perceived negative treatment can be aligned with the treatment received by mothers who could be seen by some to challenge parental gender norms by working full-time. The negative judgements towards mothers appeared to manifest themselves in slightly different ways to fathers and focused predominantly on judgements as a mother, rather than as a worker.

For example Andrew, an NHS manager participant in a focus group stated: *"I'm not worried about employing a mother full-time; it is her kids that need to be worried."* This view was echoed in the interviews with working parents and Caitlin, a full-time working mother of two who is married to a stay at home dad, stated that her choice to work full-time resulted in negative judgement from her mother-in-law about her choice of working hours: *"She thought it was disgusting that I had had children and gone back to work ... thought it was dreadful."* Interestingly, negative judgement regarding paternal full-time working hours did not emerge from the data. This can be linked to expectations regarding parental behaviour and assumptions of traditional patterns of employment (breadwinning father who works, full-time father and homemaking mother who works part-time) as mothers who work part-time also appeared to receive minimal negative judgement regarding working hours throughout all of the conditions.

In an NHS focus group, Katie, illustrated that the mother in the vignettes decision to work part-time not only did not face negative judgement but was considered to be a strength for her, stated: *“I like the idea she has recognised, herself, that she wants to get her home-work-life-balance ... she recognised it herself.”*

This sub-theme has explored the ‘Negative Judgements’ perceived to be made about caregiving fathers in the workplace and in society more widely. Whilst the data in this study has focused on caregiving fathers, mothers who worked full-time were also observed to face ‘Negative Judgements’, which extended to commentary regarding parenting ability, indicating that judgements are made about parents within the context of complex stereotypical assumptions of behaviour. In some cases, the ‘Negative Judgements’ made regarding caregiving fathers were more specific, with data pointing to such fathers as being viewed with suspicion by colleagues and managers.

### Suspicion

Whilst the previous sub-theme set out how fathers, and to a lesser extent mothers, experience broad mistreatment, this next theme explored how some fathers are viewed with ‘Suspicion’ when they attempt to combine working with caregiving responsibilities. Such data was evident in manager and working parent interviews and manger focus groups.

In the vignette based focus groups, manager participants were asked to discuss the suitability of the caregiving father applicant, represented as an applicant applying for a part-time role. Some participants viewed his motivation for applying for a part-time role with suspicion in ways that a mother was not:

*“I just wonder why he is applying for the job part-time ... I wonder why?”*

*(Naval1)*

*“But why would he (the father) be applying for a part-time role?” (Naval2)*

*“He is going from full-time to part-time and we don't really know why.” (NHS)*

Such questioning regarding the working arrangements did not emerge in the discussions of the mother applicant applying for the part-time role in any of the focus groups. Within this climate, it is plausible that a father may feel that they are discouraged from prioritising childcare (Miller, 2010; Tracy and Rivera, 2010) and thus revert to more traditional breadwinning norms.

Caregiving fathers being viewed with ‘Suspicion’ also was evident in the working parent interviews and it was particularly prominent in households that comprise a full-time working mother and part-time working father. Paul, a divorced part-time working father of one explained the response to his working hours:

*“I get a few funny faces, I get a few funny reactions ... people find a little bit weird ... oh, that's a bit weird, and that's a bit odd ... I feel that any flexibility requested from a male in the workforce is treated with suspicion. In my opinion, I feel males are still seen as the non-contact parent; therefore,*

*saying you want to reduce your hours or attend to deal with a family/child event is treated suspiciously."*

Kelly, a full-time working mother whose partner worked part-time echoed this experience and felt that the working hours of her partner are viewed with suspicion: *"Both my brothers have expressed like "why isn't he doing more to support the family?"*. The phenomena of caregiving fathers being viewed with 'Suspicion' was also evident in interviews with managers. Jon, an HR manager, expressed that:

*"It wouldn't surprise me if people would get cynical about a father working part-time in this environment ... they would struggle with the part-time working for fathers, they would struggle to be open-minded about it."*

Similarly, Mark, a senior manager believed that caregiving fathers, particularly those that work part-time are considered to be suspicious, he stated:

*"They (part-time working fathers) are viewed with a great deal more suspicion, far more suspicion that a woman working part-time ... I think this would affect recruitment as I expect at least one person on the panel would view it as suspicious and not normal. Men going part-time has been viewed with a lot of suspicion."*

It is interesting to note 'Suspicion' regarding a choice of part-time working hours did not emerge in any condition for the mothers, pointing to this being aligned with behavioural expectations for mothers rather than fathers. Being viewed with

suspicion was not the only type of 'Social Mistreatment' levied onto caregiving fathers, a prominent theme that emerged was that of 'Mockery'.

### Mockery

The 'Mockery' of caregiving fathers was evident in the vignette based focus groups and both manager and working parent interviews, with the characteristics of the mockery varying from blatant to innocuous. In the focus group within a technology environment, the 'Mockery' appeared quite light-hearted:

*"Participant A - Is it perfectly acceptable for a father to want to spend time with his children in the same way as a mother?"*

*And....*

*Participant B - Depends if they like him or not. They might be saying no please don't stay home, get a job."*

In the focus group in the charity sector, the mockery was a little more ardent and a comedic scenario was depicted when describing a caregiving father: *"He has got those kids ... strapped to his back while he's mowing the school playing field. He is sorted, happy, he is fine."* Similarly, the focus group in the technology environment mocked the caregiving husband of the full-time mother applicant, it was stated: *"She probably needs the money because her husband's a caretaker he ain't going to be bringing in a lot is he (laugh)".*



Dave, a line manager also observed the 'Mockery' of caregiving fathers and proposed that it takes the form of 'friendly banter', with varying levels of severity:

*"In some organisations I have worked, there would have been no issues (with a father working part-time). Others I would say there would be friendly banter made towards a part-time father and probably some comments with menace ... in my most recent organisation I would say that there would be 'friendly banter' but some vindictive comments are made behind people's backs depending on which area they worked in, production areas being the worst."*

Similarly, Mark, a senior manager believed that caregiving fathers face a considerable amount of mockery in the workplace, he stated:

*"There would be a lot of piss taking ... 'You are a bit of a wuss' [softie], 'she rules the roost 'wears the trousers' that sort of thing. If it (the working part-time) was due to childcare, I don't think it would be malicious but I think there would definitely be an element of piss taking 'you are not a real man', 'what is wrong with your wife' ... it would be gentle but it would definitely occur."*

Sid, a part-time writer who was a stay at home dad for his four children whilst his wife worked full-time, narrated an example of the mockery he received which seems in contrast to the 'gentle' mockery discussed by Mark: *"a man I knew joked to me, 'who are you anyway? Well, you are just a bum really aren't you.' I did not take it as a joke"*.

The data presented in this sub-theme can be seen to range from what has been termed as ‘friendly banter’ to stronger ‘more vindictive’ types of ‘Mockery’, with varying degrees of perceived severity. Not being taken seriously and mocked could explain the ratings for the caregiving father in the vignette, as well as offering a potential explanation for the adherence of fathers to breadwinning norms rather than risk the ‘Mockery’ encountered by the participants of this study. Such negative outcomes can also extend to friendships, the topic of the next theme.

### Struggling With Friendships

This sub-theme was not widely apparent in the qualitative data, nevertheless, the argument as to its inclusion is so persuasive, due to the impact it had on the fathers, that it seems appropriate to explore as a sub-theme. This specifically refers to the experience of fathers who felt that friendships were more complex as a result of the division of caregiving responsibilities.

Sue, a full-time working mother of two, outlined the experience of her husband who worked part-time:

*“Oh, he found it really difficult ... he had two young kids and the network wasn’t really there and he missed his friends ... He did struggle for a long while. He didn’t really mix with very many other fathers ... there was a big group of fathers that made really good friends with each other. He didn’t become part of that group so he was ... I’ve noticed that there is a group of fathers and he’s not one of them ... he could have been but they’ve never invited him.”*

Very similar friendship issues were experienced first-hand by Sid, father of four and part-time writer:

*"I felt excluded ... it is really difficult to pinpoint how much is my fault, I did withdraw a little, felt self-conscious, I think it is that 'what do you do for a living' ... it is always the first thing people say ... I never ask people as I don't want them to ask me ... I have friends who have known for years but not really many around here. It is having that hook and I think it is the hook of work ... I see women forming groups, I get invited to some stuff but sometimes I feel I need to step back, I have been very isolated by it ... I have never felt legitimate to be part of it."*

He continued that the parental choices and other people's reactions altered his social behaviour:

*"I don't go to (my wife's) social gatherings really the XXX is a quite closed network, XXX tend to about talk being a XXX and generally when people ask me what I do there is a blank expression nothing tangible a man can get hold of largely and I have always found that quite difficult ... I have become a bit detached from the mainstream group of friends. I never used to but now if I am in a big group I will be anxious before I go ... I didn't have too many playgroups, I didn't really want to face it (local playgroup) I didn't want to go in as the only guy ..."*

Mark, a senior manager, also believed that caregiving fathers would face a struggle with friendships, however, he was more positive and states that whilst fathers “*would not be initially part of the main group but over time I don’t think it would be a problem.*”

These findings suggest some caregiving fathers are being ostracised which can be aligned with the experience of mothers who worked outside of the home on a full-time basis. In a desire to belong in both the ‘home’ and ‘work’ group, Luby, a full-time working mother of two whose husband also works full-time expressed how she felt the need to defend her hours in different circumstances. She stated:

*“At work, I was considered full-time because I worked 30 hours ... if anybody said to me ‘Well, you only work part-time’ I would say ‘30 hours is hardly part-time’ ... But if I was in the playground and a mother said to me ‘well, of course, you work’ I would say ‘well, I only work part-time’.”*

This sub-theme of ‘Struggling with Friendship’ has explored the ‘Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers’, through perceptions of being excluded, predominantly in social settings, which has been likened to the experience of mothers who work full-time. The next sub-theme relates more closely to the workplace, focusing on the work ethic of caregiving fathers and a belief that such fathers are perceived in a less favourable way than more traditional fathers who align to conceptualisations of breadwinners.

## Viewed as Idle

The final sub-theme within the theme the of the 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers' was most prominent in the focus group discussions with elements also emerging to a slightly lesser degree in interviews with managers and working parents. The caregiving father vignette based focus group was described as "*dozy David*" during a focus group in the technology environment. Similarly, in the same focus group questions were raised about the character of the caregiving father applicant, represented as an applicant for a part-time role: "*Is he a high flyer? And is he slower off the mark?*" The implication being that he might not have as much ambition and it is challenging to disentangle this from his choice of working hours as a consequence of his caregiving responsibilities, particularly, as such statements were not made about either of the mother applicants. Participants in the charity focus group embarked on a broader discussion, moving away from the vignette and a forceful statement was made about fathers who work part-time generally:

*"There are few of them at my kids' school, I know it works for some families as she earns more than him etc. but every time I see them I just think, go to work - lazy bastard - it wouldn't work for my house."*

Paul, a divorced father of one narrated a number of statements made to him when he needed to leave work for caregiving responsibilities, which imply an impeded work ethic, they included: "*How convenient, you're not available to work again!*", "*Are you off again, you've only just arrived*", "*Nice of you to turn up*", "*Do you pay your son to be sick?*". Similarly, Dave, a line manager believes that caregiving father should

expect 'banter' aligned to conceptualisations of being idle, such as: *"taking early retirement are we?"* and *"you work-shy f\*\*\*\*r"*. Sid, a father of four, stay at home dad and part-time writer expressed that he has faced many similar judgements:

*"I think I come across as doing it as I can't do anything else ... I always think they (other parents) don't think I am capable of doing a day's work or working in a system ... Ok, that is what you are doing but what is your real job, what do you really do?. I come from Derby, and if you say you are a stay at home dad people just think you are unemployed."*

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has explored in detail the qualitative data gathered through interviews with working parents and managers and through manager vignette based focus groups with the purpose of addressing research questions two and three. Specifically, to explain why the caregiving father in the online vignette (represented as a father applying for a part-time role) obtained the lowest scores on each of the variables when compared to a part-time mother and full-time parent applicants and offer explanations as to why fathers continue to dominate the role of breadwinner for their families. The data in this chapter provided at least partial explanations for both research questions two and three, through three main themes identified as:

- 'Think Child - Think Mum'
- 'Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving' and
- 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers'.

In theme one, 'Think Child - Think Mum', presented the data that illustrated how fathers with caregiving responsibilities were viewed by some as being lesser, compared to mothers, for doing so. There was a natural order of things for many participants whose default position was mothers first when it came to the caregiving of children. Within a sub-theme of "Where's Mum?", men find themselves secondary to women and somehow less acceptable when they attempt to undertake caregiving activities. This ultimately leads to a sense of 'Unconventionality' due to misalignment of parental gender norms with significant implications on behaviour for fathers who may feel pressured to maintain the status quo. Such judgements of being somewhat 'unconventional', presents a plausible explanation for the lower ratings of the caregiving fathers in the quantitative data. Similarly, being viewed as 'unconventional' and facing consistent questions regarding the mother's location when undertaking caregiving are believed to have a role to play in the continued dominance of fathers in the role of breadwinner for their families. This will be explored in more detail in the next chapter by exploring how these findings link to existing theoretical frameworks and with a view to establishing new knowledge.

In theme two, 'Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving', the data presented was indicative that fathers obtained less practical and emotional support in the workplace for caregiving behaviour than mothers. Within this theme, the sub-theme of 'Workplace Support for Caregiving Fathers is Conditional' outlined that whilst there were circumstances where caregiving fathers obtained support, this support was contingent on circumstances in a way that support for mothers was not. Circumstances such as being a single dad were highlighted as an example of when

the level of workplace support for caregiving could be likened to that received by mothers. It is suggested that this conditional, low level of workplace support may explain the continuance of fathers in working patterns that are aligned to breadwinning, rather than alternative pathways that can be seen to be more conducive to caregiving responsibilities.

The final theme, the 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers', charts the data that pointed to fathers facing mistreatment when undertaking caregiving behaviours. This overarching theme included the sub-themes of 'Negative Judgement', 'Suspicion', 'Mockery', 'Viewed as Idle' and 'Struggling with Friendships' by way of explaining the mistreatment faced by caregiving fathers. It is suggested that fear of facing or actually facing social mistreatment might result in fathers shying away from caregiving behaviour, rejecting work patterns to facilitate such behaviour and remaining in full-time work. It is also proposed that sub-themes such as 'Negative Judgement', 'Suspicion' and 'Viewed as Idle' may also explain the disparities in the ratings of the caregiving father in the online vignette.

This chapter has consistently demonstrated that caregiving fathers (a term which includes fathers who work part-time, stay at home fathers and fathers who wish to work flexibly to allow for greater involvement in caregiving) can face a number of barriers when the attempt to undertake caregiving activities, which might explain the lower rating of the caregiving father applicant in the online vignette when compared to a part-time mother applicant and full-time parent applicants. It also offered potential explanations for the continued dominance of fathers in the role of breadwinner for



their families, which has implications for both the family and society more widely, particularly for such prevailing issues as the gender pay gap and low uptake of SPL.

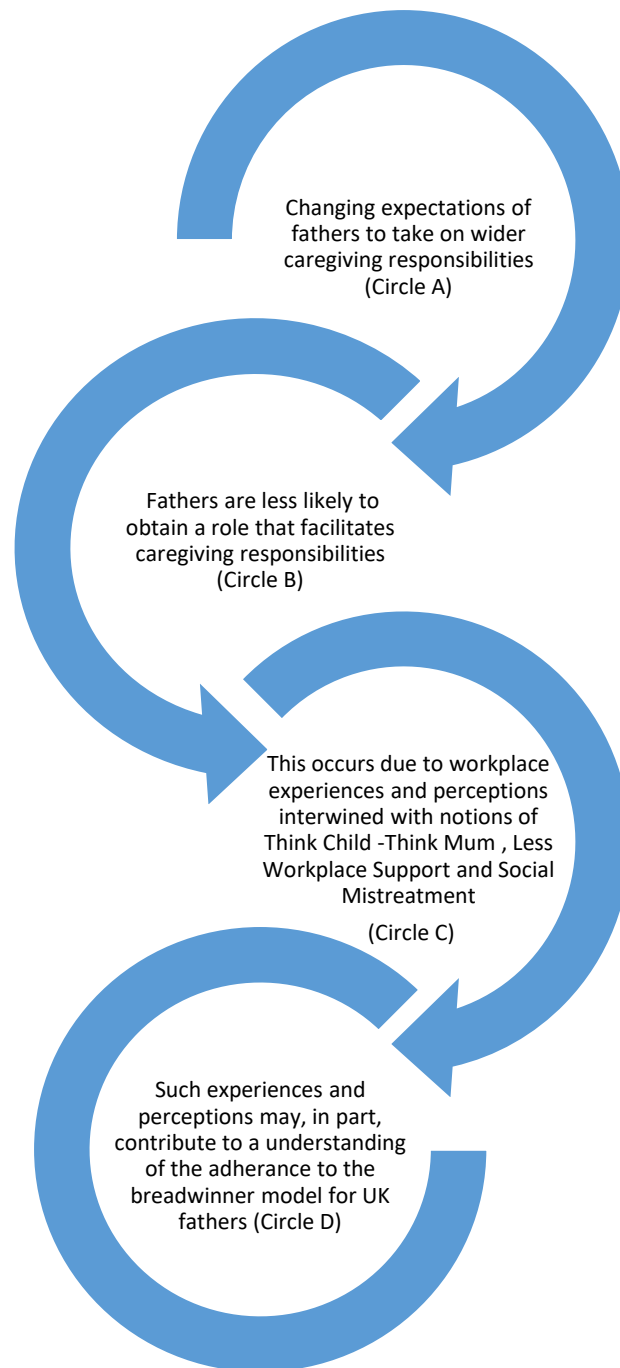
It is appropriate to note that whilst a clear link has been established between the findings of the quantitative and qualitative data and explanations offered, many areas remain unexplained and warrant further discussion. To this end, chapter 8, explores in depth the outcomes of the data collection and discusses some of the challenges with the data and the study in general to ascertain the specific contributions made by this work and areas of further exploration.

## **Chapter Eight- Discussion of Findings**

When Cuddy et al (2004) , Correll et al (2007) and Berdahl and Moon (2013) reported in their studies that fathers navigate the workplace through a context of 'benefits' and 'premiums', they did so on the basis of a North American research context using students as research participants. Whilst synergies can be made with this US research, it is challenging to make confident comparisons to UK workplaces, not least because the US has a very different pattern of labour market participation and workplace entitlement. Similarly, whilst research based on student participants has a part to play in the development of understanding of workplace experiences, how accurately this population represents the experiences of employed working parents is debatable. Thus, a study that focusses solely on the perception of UK caregiving fathers, gathering the thoughts of this population and about this population was identified as necessary. In order to fully understand the workplace perceptions of caregiving fathers it was established that exploration of the experience of this population alone would not be sufficient. Consequently, the voice of managers and working parents (mothers and more traditional breadwinning fathers) was sought to enable a fuller understanding of the experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers. This lead to the research aim of this study which is "To explore the experience and perception of caregiving fathers in contemporary UK employment".

Having presented the results of the data analysis, this chapter now presents a detailed discussion of the findings of this study, reconnecting them to theoretical foundations and ultimately to the aim and research questions of the research. The findings of this study have been aligned to a model, presented in Figure 8 to allow for

better explanation of both the quantitative and the qualitative data and to establish clearly the contributions made by this study.



**Figure 8 - Model representing Study Findings**

The discussion begins by exploring the quantitative data that emerged from the online vignette, represented in Circle B, dedicated to addressing research question one, which asked: - “How are caregiving fathers rated when applying for working arrangements which facilitate an active role in caregiving?” The purpose of the online vignette was to establish early in the study if there were any differences in the way that caregiving fathers were rated when applying for a role that would facilitate caregiving, which for the purposes of this study was presented as a part-time role. The discussion chapter then moves to explore Circles C and D, answering the remaining research questions which are ‘to understand the ratings awarded to caregiving fathers using focus groups and interviews’ and to explore ‘what explanations can be offered for the continued dominance of fathers as the family breadwinners?’.

With reference to the first part of this model, Circle A, is considered to be the start of the process and represents contemporary conceptualisations of fatherhood, in the context of which circles B, C and D exist. Circle A is underpinned by the literature review in chapters two, three and four which consistently demonstrated that academic literature is indicative of a changing role of contemporary fathers, moving away from the notion of father as breadwinner towards a more actively involved model of fathering (Scott and Clery, 2013; Gatrell et al, 2014; and Connolly, et al, 2016). The critical exploration of the literature demonstrated that contemporary UK fathers are expected and encouraged to take a more active role in the caregiving of their children. This changing role of fathers is an evolution of the role away from the more removed model of fatherhood which typified fatherhood in previous generations. This is observed to have occurred in response to a range of factors

including the changing role of women in the workplace, including the increased working hours of mothers. However, labour market statistics indicate that the purported change of role for contemporary fathers has not translated into working patterns, with the number of fathers continuing to be dominant in full-time work. This can be constructed as the epicentre of the model of the breadwinner father. This study addressed this juxtaposition, utilising managers and working parents as participants, with the aim of ascertaining the rationale for the apparent maintenance of the status quo in working patterns despite a widely proposed change of ideology with regard to fatherhood in the UK.

### **Caregiving fathers are less likely to obtain a role that facilitates caregiving responsibilities than mothers (Circle B)**

Circle B is illustrative of the data that emerged from the quantitative analysis, specifically addressing research question one which sought to explore how caregiving fathers are rated when applying for work whilst having caregiving responsibilities. For the purposes of comparison, it was important to understand how a father was rated when compared to a mother applying for the same part-time role and also how parent applicants applying for a full-time role were rated. Descriptive statistics demonstrated that the caregiving father applying for the role of part-time Customer Services Manager was rated lower than the mother applicant for the same role and full-time Customer Services Manager applicants. However, this result was not statistically significant and whilst descriptive statistics are insightful, more detailed analysis was necessary if wider generalisations were to be made. To this end, an

Analysis of Covariance was undertaken (ANCOVA) and observed a significant interaction to exist between the 'Gender of Applicant' (mother/father) and 'Applicant Working Hours' (full-time/part-time) and also between 'Gender of Applicant', 'Applicant Working Hours' and 'Applicant Rating' (promotability/hireability/workplace commitment/perceived competence). Therefore, with specific reference to the first research question, a statistically significant difference was found to exist between the ratings of a caregiving father (represented as a father who wishes to work part-time to facilitate caregiving responsibilities), the rating of a mother who was applying for the same role and parent applicants for a full-time role. This demonstrates that fathers who have caregiving responsibilities are less likely to obtain a part-time role than a mother or a parent applicant applying for a full-time role, implying that such fathers face less favourable perceptions.

Whilst much existing research in the work and family arena points to workplace 'benefits' and 'premiums' for fatherhood status, (Loh, 1996; Cuddy et al, 2004; Correll et al 2007; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013), this finding fits squarely with research that shows fathers who challenge traditional gender norms will face barriers for doing so (Connell, 2005; Burnett et al, 2012). This finding also supports UK studies which found that fathers have diminished access to working arrangements that facilitate caregiving, such as flexible working, when compared to mothers (Fagan et al, 2006; Miller, 2011 cited by Gatrell and Cooper, 2016). Furthermore, it supports earlier research which found that fathers who frame their working lives in this way will be viewed negatively as a consequence (Doucet, 2006; Doucet and Merla, 2007; Rudman and Mescher, 2013; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013). This implies that the US research findings of fathers struggling to obtain access to working arrangements that

facilitate caregiving and being viewed negatively when doing so are supported in the UK context. However, with regard to the receipt of 'benefits' and 'premiums' for caregiving, these did not appear to emerge in a UK context for caregiving fathers with manager participants. Therefore care needs to be taken when attempting to make use of US findings in this area, within the UK context.

The findings of the ANCOVA analyses also supports UK survey research which recently reported that when fathers try to find roles that they can combine with family life, they will face a 'fatherhood penalty' (Modern Families Index, 2018). This latest 2018 research findings offers new directions for research in this area as they provide further insights regarding the ways in which such a 'penalty' might manifest. Consequently, the data from this study provides additional further insights and knowledge on the ways in which such 'penalties' directly impact upon the management decision-making process, consciously or unconsciously, which is central to informing workplace practice and reducing potential biases.

A detailed exploration of the outputs of the Estimated Marginal Means (EMM) for each of the dependent variables provided wider knowledge regarding the ways in which disparities in the manager ratings of the caregiving father were exhibited. The caregiving father in the online vignette was rated as being less promotable than the mother counterpart and both the male and female full-time applicants, a finding which appears to challenge some of the existing US literature in this area. Such previous literature observed a strong association between fatherhood and promotion (Cuddy et al, 2004; Correll et al 2007; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013), and found that men are more likely to be promoted than women (Biernat and Kobrynowicz, 1997; Rudman

and Glick, 1999; and Eagly and Karau, 2002). The finding from this study specifically reporting perceptions through the lenses of UK managers and working parents indicates that the status of caregiving father can have direct and detrimental implications for promotion in UK workplaces. At present, this nuanced insight is largely ignored in UK research which could be detrimental to individuals, employers and the wider labour market. Such a finding also has numerous practical implications for workplaces, including workplace policy relating to promotion, selection, equality and diversity and associated workplace training/learning and development. Both policy and training have a role in ensuring that adequate attention is placed on the extent to which parental gender disparities permeate throughout organisational decision-making regarding promotion practices.

The ratings pattern that emerged for the variable of 'promotability', in which the caregiving father part-time applicant was rated lower than the mother applicant for the same role and rated lower than both the male and female full-time parent applicants, can be likened to that received for the variable of 'hireability' for part-time applicants. Given that the existing literature, largely US based, has found fathers in the workplace to be given more authority because of their associations with stability and flexibility (Hodges and Budig, 2010; Berdahl and Moon, 2013; and Kmec, et al, 2014), higher ratings against the variable of 'hireability' are perhaps to be expected. After all, if perceptions of someone are that they are stable and flexible, it follows that they could be considered hireable. However, only a small disparity was observable between the caregiving father part-time applicant and the full-time father applicant for the 'hireability' variable, in contrast to the noteworthy disparity for 'promotability' between part-time and full-time applicants. The fathers *per se* were associated with



lower ratings of 'hireability' rather than specifically caregiving fathers. This challenges existing literatures which espouse that being a father in the workplace results in 'premiums' and 'benefits' (Loh, 1996; Cuddy et al, 2004; Correll et al 2007; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013) and isn't fully explained by research that advocates the existence of a 'fatherhood penalty' (Modern Families Index, 2018) – the latter observed that caregiving fathers face a penalty, and penalties were not universally applied to all fathers. The finding in this study suggests a significant deviation from existing literature in this area. The data is unusual implying that UK managers may perceive the 'hireability' of caregiving fathers in a different way to researchers in the US and indicates fathers to be less hireable than mothers in the workplace. This requires further research, possibly using a repeat of the online vignette study, with a larger, more diverse sample, across a wider geographical area. This would be appropriate to establish if this effect remains or whether it was as a result of the vignette design, participant assumptions regarding the purpose of the online vignette, or is just simply representative of the South West of England from which most of the sample originated.

When considering ratings against the variable of 'workplace commitment', the EMM once again demonstrated that the caregiving father who was a part-time applicant obtained lower ratings than the mother counterpart and once again against both the male and female full-time working parents applicants. As previous research has associated fathers with increased workplace dedication and commitment than mothers (Arrighi and Maume, 2000; Townsend, 2002; Fuegen et al, 2004, Connell, 2005; Hodges and Budig, 2010; and Kmec et al, 2014), this finding suggests new ways of conceptualising caregiving fathers in the workplace, implying an element of

conditionality whereby perceptions of 'workplace commitment' are contingent on the maintenance of breadwinner ideologies. The data indicates that those who deviate from this risk face biases, unconscious or conscious, within the workplace and this appears to be due to misalignment with expected patterns of behaviour. This issue of conditionality emerged significantly from the qualitative data and will be returned to later in this chapter.

A potential explanation for why a caregiving father might be considered to have less 'workplace commitment' than the other parent applicant was offered by the work of Blair-Loy (2003). Blair-Loy observed that fathers are expected to be governed by work devotion, whereas mothers are expected to be driven by family devotion, thus, when a father appears to reject work devotion, in favour of family devotion it follows that they might encounter a reduced perception of 'workplace commitment'. A key way in which this might be avoided is through role modelling within organisations, starting from the very top of the organisation, with senior managers demonstrating through their actions that commitment to work and family are not mutually exclusive and can co-exist.

The final dependant variable of 'perceived competence' saw the caregiving father part-time applicant again obtain the lowest rating out of all of the applicants. As with previous variables this is also contrary to earlier research from the US which found fathers to be evaluated as being more competent than non-fathers (Cuddy et al, 2004; Correll et al 2007; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013). However, these US studies compared full-time fathers who aligned to the more traditional breadwinning model, to full-time non-fathers. The findings from this study provide a more nuanced understanding of how fathers are rated regarding 'perceived competence' and imply

that fatherhood *per se* does not result in a high rating, and when fathers move away from this norm this can impact negatively upon how their competence is perceived.

A large differential was discovered between the EMM's of the caregiving father applicant (for the part-time role) and the more traditional father applicant (for the full-time role), highlighting the contingent nature of 'perceived competence'. This issue may benefit from being addressed in detail through pre-existing organisational HR systems such as performance management, recruitment and selection. In particular, through ensuring that managers are fully trained on the specific risk of discrimination with regard to 'percieved competence' for caregiving fathers in the workplace, the disadvantage that emerged in this study may be minimised.

The finding of this research with regard to 'percieved competence' is in line with the gender stereotype discourse which advocates that those who act in line with gendered expectations of behaviour will be rewarded, whereas those who violate them can expect to face penalties (Heilman and Wallen,2010; Mcdowell,2015). This finding provides a new direction of debate into the experience of UK caregiving fathers suggesting complexity in the way in which such fathers are viewed with regard to 'perceived competence'. Consequently, an area for wider debate is signified to establish if this same finding could emerge in a repeat of this study, with differing sample composition and if so, to explore the arising workplace implications of such a finding.

Overall, the quantitative analysis has provided a convincing argument regarding the existence of a disparity in the ratings of the caregiving father (for the part-time role)

compared to a mother applicant for the same role and parent applicants for a full-time role. The findings make a clear contribution to knowledge in a UK context, and is particularly pertinent in light of the current UK labour market and particularly in the South West of England which has observed a growth in flexible, transitory and precarious forms of work. In this climate, the needs of both parents fulfilling their labour market contributions needs to be considered and employers who recognise, encourage and support this will be potentially better placed to capitalise on the advantage of a committed workforce that recognises the support of the employer in meeting family needs. The quantitative data is indicative that managers discriminate against caregiving fathers, which is contrary to the premise of equality in the workplaces and contravening best practice organisational workplace policies. Whilst many contemporary organisations require employee's to undertake unconscious bias training, most pre-existing training of this type tends to focus on unconscious bias towards ethnic minorities and women. This research is suggestive of a need for an increase in the remit of such training to include the specific challenges faced by caregiving fathers in the workplace to fully address the discrimination observed in this study.

Whilst enlightening, the quantitative data from the online vignette as depicted in Circle B of Figure 8 does not provide indications as to why the caregiving father might have been rated lower than their counterparts, and neither does it explain any potential linkages between this finding and the dominance of the breadwinning father model in the UK. To this end, the discussion now turns to Circles C and D in the model, exploring the perceptions and experiences of caregiving fathers in

contemporary employment in more depth through the qualitative data, specifically addressing research question's two and three.

### **Experiences and Perceptions of Caregiving Fathers from the Viewpoint of Managers and Working Parents (Circle C and D)**

The perceptions and experiences of caregiving fathers in contemporary employment were investigated through vignette based focus groups with managers as well as in semi-structured interviews with both managers and working parents and the emerging data is depicted in Circles C and D of the model outlined in Figure 8. The study proposes that Circle C offers explanations for the findings depicted in Circle B, primarily, that the lower ratings of the caregiving father in both part-time and full-time scenarios of the vignette can be explained through three main themes. The main themes are identified as 'Think Child -Think Mum', 'Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving' and 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers', each of which contains sub-themes emerging from the in-depth exploration of the data. The model continues to demonstrate through Circle D that such experiences and perceptions may, in part, explain the adherence to the breadwinner model for UK fathers.

#### **Theme 1- 'Think Child - Think Mum'**

The theme of 'Think Child - Think Mum' emerged in all elements of the qualitative data and is a term utilised to describe the automatic association between mothers and children. Mothers in the workplace were observed to be consistently associated

with their children however, for fathers in the workplace minimal association with children occurred, irrespective of caregiving responsibilities. In the focus groups when discussing the part-time and full-time mother applicants, motherhood status was a focal point when exploring applicant suitability. However, for the father applicants, both caregiving (part-time) and full-time, fatherhood status did not emerge in the discussion of applicant suitability. Similarly, in the interviews, this automatic linkage between mother and child was also visible - for example, it was expressed by many participants that if a child was sick whilst at school or in daycare it was the mother who would be called and to asked to collect the child rather than the father.

These findings are consistent with a wide body of literature (outlined in chapters two, three and four) which advocated that organisational parental expectations assume gendered patterns of behaviour, with mothers as principal child carers, and fathers as principal providers primarily associated with breadwinning (Gregory and Milner, 2009, 2011; Miller, 2010; Tracy and Rivera, 2010; and Burnett et al, 2012). Such a classification can be constructed as advantageous for fathers who conform to parental gender stereotypes by displaying breadwinning behaviours, such as working full-time, and subsequently reap the benefits of being conceptualised as an 'unencumbered worker' regardless of parental status (Berns, 2002). However, for caregiving fathers who position themselves as having dual obligations to both work and home spheres the absence of organisational parental expectations from fathers potentially explains the lower ratings in the online vignette, and demonstrates the challenges for such fathers in obtaining roles that assist with the management of dual spheres.

It is plausible that the lower ratings of the caregiving father in the online vignette may be reflective of the inability of recruiters to reconcile a father's application for part-time work due to caregiving responsibilities, with pre-established expectations of fathers to be 'unencumbered' and aligned to breadwinning behaviours, consequently, caregiving fathers appear to be facing bias. The notion of caregiving fathers facing bias supports the premise of role congruity theory (Eagly and Karau, 2002) which advocates that those who behave in a manner that is counter stereotypically to their gender will face sanctions (Santrock, 1994; and Chesley, 2011). The sanctions deployed to those who move away from expected behaviour, whilst not overtly damaging, can result in perceptions of reduced worth for some. In order to more deeply explore the 'Think Child - Think Mum' theme, sub-themes of "Where is Mum?" and 'Unconventionality' were identified. These provided further insights of clarity as to how this broad theme plays out.

#### *"Where is Mum?"*

Within the overarching theme of 'Think Child - Think Mum' the sub-theme of "Where is Mum?" was identified. This precise phrase emerged in many interviews with both managers and working parents and was identified as prominent to be classified as a sub-theme. This phrase can be conceptualised as an enactment of 'Think Child - Think Mum' with comments emerging due to many respondents' automatic assumptions that a child is associated with a mother, rather than a father. Whilst "Where is Mum?" comments can be construed as innocuous, such comments can be considered to have a part to play in keeping fathers in a secondary parental role and mothers in the primary caregiving role, regardless of caregiving status. Such

secondary positioning of caregiving fathers has implications on how fathers are perceived within contemporary employment and potentially offers explanations for their domination in the realms of the 'breadwinning' role, rather than working arrangements which are more conducive to caregiving. The emergence of such comments can be interpreted as guiding behaviour in circumstances where there is no pre-existing script (such as for new parents), transmitting a message of what is expected, or not, regarding the involvement of fathers in caregiving responsibilities.

The broad concept undepinning "Where is Mum?" has not been specifically identified in existing literature and therefore can be considered to offer a new direction for debate in this area. For example, is the concept of "Where is Mum?" UK specific or does it also emerge in other international contexts? Is it specific to the industries of the participants of this study? Is it unique to the South-West of England, from which most participants derive, and which is typified by relatively low average working hours and high employment levels? (ONS, 2018, Regional Labour Market Statistics in the UK, September, 2018). The notion of "Where is Mum?" could have implications for the social exchanges within workplaces, as there appears to be an underestimation of the potential impact of what can be constructed as 'small talk' which might require a revision of workplace codes of conduct for employees. Whilst the sub-theme of "Where is Mum?" offers directions for future research and insights into the daily experiences of caregiving fathers it does not add any further explanation for the lower ratings assigned to the caregiving father applying for part-time work in the online vignette. However, the second sub-theme of 'Unconventionality' within the theme of 'Think Child - Think Mum' was observed to offer many potential explanations for the lower ratings of the caregiving father in the online vignette.



## *Unconventionality*

The 'Unconventionality' of caregiving fathers emerged as a recurring theme in the qualitative data and makes two main contributions. Firstly, that caregiving fathers are conceptualised as 'unconventional' and, secondly, that as a consequence, caregiving fathers who wish to undertake roles that would facilitate caregiving may be rated lower than more 'conventional' applicants, such as mothers applying for part-time roles or fathers applying for full-time roles. Each of these main contributions will be explored in turn and associated connections made to the existing literatures in this area.

The data within this theme implied that caregiving fathers can be characterised as deviating away from what is perceived to be a conventional way to behave, affirming existing research of Swiss workers which proposed that parents at work sometimes believe they "feel different from the category in which they fall" (Janasz, Forret, Haack and Karsten, 2013; 205). Similarly, it provides support for US based research which has observed that individuals who embark on counter stereotypical behaviour will be conceptualised as different from the norm (Rudman and Fairchild, 2004; Moss-Racusin et al, 2012) and provides evidence that this effect is not limited to the US and also prevails in a UK context.

Perceptions of being viewed as 'unconventional' could in part explain the lower ratings of the caregiving father in the online vignette, which was a finding previously observed in a US context. Researchers found that students rated gender-consistent

fictitious applicants for job roles higher than those that were inconsistent with gender expectations (Heilman et al 2004; Heilman and Okimoto, 2007; and Heilman and Wallen, 2010). The findings of this thesis, which utilises UK managers and working parents rather than US based students, has demonstrated the prevalence of alignment between judgements of 'Unconventionality' and caregiving fathers. It has highlighted that such an alignment holds true internationally and is observable in the UK workplace as it was in the US, despite the many differences in the employment climate between the two countries.

Being judged as 'unconventional' can be conceptualised as having two main impacts upon caregiving fathers. Firstly, it may affect the ability of caregiving fathers to obtain working arrangements conducive to caregiving and, secondly, it may also act as a deterrent to caregiving fathers applying for such working arrangements. This outcome may potentially explain the dominance of fathers in the role of family breadwinner, rather than alternative pathways that can be considered to be more conducive to caregiving.

The theme of 'Think Child - Think Mum' has helped to develop understanding of the ratings assigned during the online vignette and also offered explanations for the dominance of fathers in modes of working patterns aligned with breadwinning rather than caregiving. The discussion moves now to the theme of 'Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving'. This wider exploration of the data supports answers to the research questions, in particular, enabling an exploration of the details of the ramifications of the theme discussed above, of 'Think Child - Think Mum'.

## Theme 2-Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving

The theme of 'Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving' was one of the most widely apparent and consistent themes in interviews with participants. The data were indicative that many support mechanisms exist in the workplace for parents, but that mothers are widely in receipt of them in a way that fathers are not. Whilst the types of support varied between participants, the reduced extent of the support was consistent. The amount of empathy received in the workplace by mothers was a common theme as was the extent that mothers received 'leeway'. Specifically, the expectation was noted that work might take a little longer if someone was a mother and that colleagues would be supportive about this, which did not emerge for caregiving fathers. A further common thread within the qualitative data with regard to support was reduced access to working arrangements that facilitate caregiving, such as part-time and flexible working whereas a sense of understanding emerged when it came to mothers wanting to utilise such working arrangements, something that did not emerge for caregiving fathers.

The findings within this overarching theme are consistent with existing research findings which suggest that workplace support for fathers as parents is limited (Crompton, 2002; Smith and Stokoe, 2005; and Tracy and Rivera, 2010) and that a gap exists between a father's desire to be actively involved in caregiving and organisational support for this behaviour (Miller, 2010), as well as the assertions of Burnett et al that fathers are invisible in their role as parents (2012; 21). These findings offer direct explanations for the results of the online vignette in which the

caregiving father applicant received the lowest ratings of all applicants. By way of comparison, this research has also found that mothers in the workplace appeared to receive wider support for caregiving, with many research interviewees giving examples of how mothers are supported in the workplace and sharing their ideas of how mothers might be supported further with mechanisms varying from preferential parking to altered work patterns. Such findings are consistent with existing, largely UK-based research studies which found that mothers obtain wider informal flexibility than fathers (Lewis, 1997; Holter, 2007; and Tracy and Riveria, 2010). Furthermore, that working arrangements which facilitate caregiving are neither associated with, or accessed by, fathers (Smithson and Stokoe, 2005; Lewis, Gambles and Rapoport, 2007; Teasdale, 2012; and Working Families Index, 2018). Reasons offered for this have included the challenges in accessing such support for fathers (Doucet, 2006 ; Dex and Ward, 2007; and Gatrell et al, 2014) and a lack of awareness regarding the applicability of existing support channels to fathers (Sheridan, 2004; and Burnett et al, 2012).

This study provides further insight into the way in which the differential in support for working parents manifest themselves in UK workplaces. The concept of ‘Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving’ adds new knowledge to the existing debate and provides insights by offering fine-grained clarity on the ways in which the differential regarding workplace support for fathers exists. Such differentials is suggested here to have wide ranging implications, in particular, if mothers obtain more workplace support, then they might continue in the role of primary caregiver regardless of whether this is their desire or not, resulting in fathers remaining in a secondary position as a default. Consequently, such stereotypes can

be considered to prevent real progression of gender equality and in the long-term maintenance of women being viewed as perhaps unsuited for senior roles due to associations with caregiving and the provision of organisational support. It also indicates specific challenges for single fathers, for example, if they find themselves unable to obtain workplace support and there is no other parent to share the responsibility this may result in exit from the workforce, potentially placing more pressure on the benefits system.

To reduce such identified disparities between mothers and fathers there are a number of potential interventions that could be employed. Such potential interventions might occur at the macro, Government level and include changes in policy, such as giving fathers increased rights and access in order to complement Shared Parental Leave, and may need to include revisions to the Equality Act (2010) to include 'parental status' as a protected characteristic to protect fathers as well as to ensure mothers are protected by legal rights rather than by what may be variable levels of 'good practice' across all job sectors. Similarly, it is possible that wider, compulsory reporting of the uptake rates of working arrangements that support caregiving, such as part-time working or flexible working, as with the current Gender Pay Gap Reporting, might highlight the disparities in support with a view to minimisation. To enable either of these changes, involvement of bodies such as the CIPD and TUC would be central to lobbying for such a change. Potential interventions at the organisational level are wide ranging, such as wider education of employers and employees to increase awareness regarding gender neutrality in workplace policies and management training to ensure that managers are made aware of the risk of bias when recruiting and managing employees. Additionally, at the micro level,

disparities between parents may be reduced through active role modelling and championing caregiving fathers to highlight this issue and improve equality for both parents in the workplace.

As with 'Think Child - Think Mum', the theme of 'Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving' sits within Circle C of the model depicted in Figure 8, offering both an explanation for the outcomes in Circle B and feeding into the findings of Circle D. It is proposed that an inability to obtain workplace support may have a part to play in the maintenance of fathers in the more traditional role of breadwinner through an inability of fathers to obtain support for caregiving responsibilities. Alternatively, it could occur because of an incumbent belief amongst caregiving fathers that they would be less likely to obtain such workplace support and therefore why bother with submitting such requests, thus creating a sense of a self-fulfilling prophecy (Sheridan, 2004; Allard et al, 2011; and Gatrell and Cooper, 2016). Certainly, the results of the quantitative part of this study, as illustrated in Circle B, point to this being a reality rather than an inaccurate presumption. However, wider research in this area utilising a larger, more diverse sample is necessary to explore this in more detail before making much broader generalisations. This will be explored in more detail in chapter nine.

The discussion now turns to explore the emerging theme of 'Workplace Support for Fathers is Conditional' where it is highlighted that the circumstances in which a father takes on caregiving responsibilities, and the extent of negotiation embarked upon with the employer or potential employer, appears to directly impact upon the likelihood of workplace support being obtained. Such elements of conditionality and

negotiation did not emerge for working mothers and is thus worthy of deeper discussion.

### *Workplace Support for Caregiving Fathers is Conditional*

The sub-theme of 'Workplace Support for Caregiving Fathers is Conditional' occurred frequently in the qualitative data and implies that the nature and the extent of support offered to caregiving fathers was contingent on the circumstances of the father. For example, in the working parent interviews, the words "*negotiation*", "*battle*", "*justification*" and "*making a fuss*", all emerged as part of the process of caregiving fathers attempting to obtain workplace support. Such comments were absent in the discussion with or about working mothers. It was apparent from the analysis that during the negotiation, single father status was an example of a circumstance when caregiving fathers could expect to receive a more equal level of support to that afforded to mothers.

These findings not only support existing research from Norway (Brandth and Kvande, 2002; and Bloksgaard, 2015) which observed an element of inherent negotiation for caregiving fathers, but has extended this further, firstly, by identifying circumstances in which negotiation was more likely to be successful and secondly, by considering negotiation in the UK context. The notion of conditionality strengthens existing theoretical understandings presented by Gatrell et al, (2014), who found that workplace flexibility was considered to be obtained by fathers only through competing with mothers. The conditional nature of workplace support as identified in this research has not emerged from the existing literature and therefore can be

considered as helping inform academic debate, by presenting new ways of understanding why caregiving fathers may obtain a reduced level of support and the circumstances in which support can be obtained. This theme warrants wider exploration to investigate if this element of 'conditionality' emerges in a larger scale study, with more variation with regard to the geography and demographics of participants and to explore if other circumstances exist in which support is obtained which did not emerge in this study.

The theme of 'Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving' and its sub-theme, 'Workplace Support for Caregiving Fathers is Conditional' has shed further light on why the caregiving father depicted in the online vignette might have obtained lower scores than their counterparts. Additionally, as indicated earlier, the perception of fathers (which may or may not be the reality) that they will be likely to obtain less support if they seek it, might impact upon the likelihood that they will continue to align to the breadwinner model rather than other alternative pathways more conducive to caregiving.

The final theme that emerged from the qualitative data was identified as the 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers' and is considered to be central to providing a deeper understanding regarding the rationale for the lower ratings for the caregiving father in the online vignette and potentially to explain why fathers continue to dominate in working arrangements aligned to breadwinning.



### Theme 3- Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers

The term 'Social Mistreatment' was proposed by Berdahl and Moon (2013) to explain the everyday mistreatment of caregiving fathers and this term has been adopted as a theme in this study due to the similarities of the emerging data and its utility in enabling cross-country comparisons to be made. In a general sense, this theme affirms the findings of Berdahl and Moon (2013), as the 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers' observed in their 2013 US study was also widely observable in this study. However, this theme also builds on existing knowledge through providing more detail as to the type of 'Social Mistreatment' experienced by caregiving fathers in a UK context, from the viewpoint of managers and working parents. The 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers' was evident in all elements of the qualitative data and the data within this theme has been categorised into five sub-themes of 'Negative Judgement', 'Suspicion', and 'Viewed as Idle ', 'Mockery and Struggling with Friendships 'to allow for a full exploration of this.

#### *Negative Judgement*

A sense of 'Negative Judgement' towards caregiving fathers emerged consistently in the data. In particular, working parents reported that the involvement of fathers in caregiving results in *"people being fairly judgemental"*, making *"disparaging"* comments and more generally obtaining less respect than fathers who align to breadwinning norms. It was evident that there was an assumption that undertaking caregiving responsibilities was considered in some way to be a *"comedown"* from breadwinning, essentially resulting in a reduction in social status. The lower scores

received by the caregiving father in the online vignette can be conceptualised as an embodiment of such 'Negative Judgement' and can be seen to ultimately hinder a caregiving father in obtaining a role that enables the combination of work and caregiving.

This finding is consistent with the existing literature surrounding the gender stereotyping of parents, in which previous US research (largely undertaken with student participants) has found that parents who break parental gender norms face disapproval, are more likely to be disliked than those who conform, face prejudice and experience implicit and explicit workplace discrimination and harassment (Wayne and Cordiero, 2003; Brescoll and Ulman, 2005; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013). The findings of this study confirms this 'Negative Judgement' in a UK context, and is observable through the lenses of managers and working parents. This data highlights broadly similar findings to existing research and holds true over time, existing in 2018 as it did in the early 1990's, despite the widely advocated view that the role of fathers has evolved away from breadwinning to a more involved, 'hands-on' model.

### *Suspicion*

'Suspicion', as a sub-theme of 'Social Mistreatment' emerged in all elements of the data with participants expressing that there was "*cynicism*" surrounding a father who wanted to be actively involved in the care of their children, a cynicism that did not emerge for mothers. Participants shared assumptions they made about caregiving fathers' involvement in caregiving and how this was often associated with 'Suspicion',

whereas, for mother such 'Suspicion' was not evident and their involvement appeared to be more understood and accepted.

The concept of 'Suspicion' took varying forms with some participants expressing 'suspicion' about why a father was involved rather than the mother, and others assuming that the involvement of the father was due to a reason not related to parenting, such as an inability to obtain work that was conducive to breadwinning. This effect is similar to that observed by Doucet and Merla in her work with Canadian stay-at-home fathers (Doucet and Merla, 2007; see also Doucet, 2009) who observed such fathers encountered 'social scrutiny' and interactions being 'tinged with suspicion'.

This study makes a potential theoretical contribution in this area as it appears that this effect is observable not only for Canadian stay at home fathers, but also for fathers who combine work and caregiving responsibilities in a UK context. Fathers in a UK context who had dual responsibilities to the home and the workplace were observed to face challenges akin to Canadian fathers who focused their complete attention on caregiving in a stay at home father capacity. Whilst outside this scope of this study, further research in this area would be interesting to explore if the issue of 'Suspicion' also emerges in other contexts, for example, is it also evident with regard to male caregiving of elderly parents or a disabled partner?

As with previous sub-themes, the notion of being viewed with 'Suspicion' can be conceptualised as having a likely implication regarding the disparities in the ratings between the caregiving father applicant in the online vignette and the other parent

applicants as depicted in Circle B of the model (see Figure 8). It is plausible that the lower ratings assigned to the caregiving father may be a consequence of managers viewing the fathers with ‘Suspicion’ which impacted on the ratings assigned to the caregiving father.

### *Viewed as Idle*

The sub-theme of being ‘Viewed as Idle’ observed caregiving fathers being described as “dozy”, “lazy”, “work-shy” and “unemployed”. Such associations between caregiving fathers and idleness did not emerge regarding mothers in the qualitative data. These perceptions indicated once again that fathers were not naturally associated with children in the way that mothers were and therefore when fathers had caregiving responsibilities the reconciling of this behaviour with pre-existing expectations of parental behaviour was challenging.

Such perceptions of caregiving fathers can be aligned with existing research from over twenty years ago in the US which also found fathers to be criticised more than mothers for doing too little paid work (Etaugh and Folger, 1998; and Deutsch and Saxon, 1998), particularly with stay at home fathers observed to be viewed as a ‘good for nothing’ when they relinquished paid work (Vandello et al, 2008).

This sub-theme demonstrated that this specific area of ‘Social Mistreatment’ remains in existence over time and overcomes geographic barriers by translating to a UK context. This is a further indicator that any change in ideologies surrounding the changing role of fathers to a more actively involved model, as suggested to have

occurred in the UK, might be further away than suggested. Naturally, if caregiving fathers are conceptualised as 'idle' then it is likely to have an impact on how they are rated during the selection process and this can be considered to be a potential contributory factor in the maintenance of the UK societal norm of full-time, breadwinning father rather than pathways which might allow for a more active role in caregiving.

The conceptualisation of caregiving fathers as being 'Viewed as Idle' has not been previously identified in the UK context implying that this perception warrants wider exploration, specifically, to ascertain if this holds true in other contexts, but also within contexts in which the labour market participation rates of parents is more equal, in order to explore if the associations of idleness remain. As with previous sub-themes, if organisations are to minimise the potential for the 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers' on the basis of perceptions of being 'Viewed as Idle', attention needs to be paid to all elements of the employment relationship. In particular, recruitment and selection, performance management and promotion processes would benefit from review to explore areas for potential bias as a result of associations between caregiving fathers and conceptualisations of being 'Viewed as Idle'. This could include wider awareness of how such conceptualisations emerge to both increase understanding and enable eventual eradication.

### *Mockery*

As with previous sub-themes within the broad arena of 'Social Mistreatment', 'Mockery' emerged frequently in the data analysis, throughout which caregiving

fathers were associated with *“banter”*, *“not being taken seriously”* and *“piss taking”*. This is suggestive that a father undertaking caregiving responsibilities is somehow a source of humour, which was frequently observed to be intertwined with conceptualisations of reduced masculinity.

The concept of caregiving fathers facing ‘Mockery’ is not a unique concept as much previous research from both the UK and the US has observed that such fathers are regularly subjected to teasing and name calling (Kerfoot and Knights, 1993; Collinson and Heard, 1994; Messerschmitt, 2000; Kimmel and Mahler, 2003; Gregory, 2009; and Solomon, 2014). It is interesting to note that with the exception of Solomon (2014), much of the research in this area is over ten years old and some over twenty years old. As such, this finding is interesting because it demonstrates that little has changed with regard to the associations of caregiving fatherhood and ‘Mockery’, at least in this study. This is somewhat surprising given the UK climate of purported societal change regarding the conceptualisation of fatherhood and Government interventions through legislation, highlighting that there is significant progress still to be made. Facing actual or perceived mockery is proposed as a potential explanation for the UK adherence to the breadwinner model, offering a further explanation for the ratings received by the caregiving father (part-time applicant) in the online vignette and thus potentially demonstrating that caregiving fathers are not taken seriously when they seek to obtain roles that enable caregiving. Whilst the issue of ‘Mockery’ emerged from the qualitative data, this issue was not specifically explored through the semi-structured interview questions therefore, wider investigation into the theme of ‘Mockery’ is necessary to fully understand its nature and any arising implications thereafter.

### *Struggle with Friendships*

The final sub-theme within the theme of 'Social Mistreatment' was not widely apparent across the data and only emerged in interviews with working parents. However, due to the perceived impact of this sub-theme on the participants it was decided to categorise it as a sub-theme in its own right rather than merge with existing sub-themes. When discussing issues surrounding friendships, working parents, specifically caregiving fathers, reported numerous friendship issues. Some father participants expressed a feeling of "*exclusion*" which they believed was a consequence of them undertaking an active role in caregiving in favour of a more traditional, breadwinning role. Similarly, participants articulated that as a consequence of their caregiving responsibilities they felt that they "*struggled to find a place*", feeling a lack of a sense of belonging with either the mothers or with breadwinning fathers, and that such a lack of association with other fathers was assumed to be due to the minority status of caregiving fathers.

Existence of this struggle is widely acknowledged within the established work and family literature with many academics, predominantly those not from the UK, observing that caregiving fathers feel "*ostracised*" when attending activities with their children (Sheridan citing Petre, 1998; 216; Doucet, 2004; and Merla, 2008), and experience isolation and social exclusion (Bird, 1996; Berdahl and Moon, 2013; and Locke, 2016). Essentially they are being associated with the 'out-group' (Tajfael,

1979) who are legitimately kept at a social distance from the 'in-group' (Sunar, 1978; and Smith, 1983).

This study did not specifically explore why caregiving fathers might have struggled with friendships, whether it was due to lack of understanding as to why a father would undertake caregiving responsibilities and thus disassociation, whether other parents couldn't reconcile this behaviour with pre-existing gender stereotypes or whether such parents are subject to prejudice. The study did not purposively set out to explore the social identity theory aspects of in- and out-groups and this could be a fruitful avenue for researchers interested in following the stereotyping of fathers further. Further research into this sub-theme with a wider sample of caregiving fathers is envisaged to be central to the unpicking of this theme and to increasing the understanding of it.

Whilst the sub-theme of 'Struggle with Friendships' does not specifically add any further explanations to the ratings given to the caregiving father in the online vignette, at least in the way that some of the other sub-themes have, it does shed further light on the dominance of the breadwinning model in the UK. For example, in a desire to maintain a position of social inclusion, fathers may continue to align themselves to breadwinner mentalities, even if they may prefer to undertake wider caregiving responsibilities.

It is important to acknowledge that most of the data from this theme emerged from social settings other than specifically the workplace, therefore, how much this theme translates into workplace practices or indeed impacts upon workplace decision-



making is unclear. However, this theme is suggested as warranting further investigation to explore if such friendship issues do indeed impact upon workplace decision-making and thus, if organisations should put in place wider support networks for caregiving fathers to help overcome this issue.

The overarching theme of 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers' has several potential implications and contributions to existing knowledge in the following ways. Firstly, the sub-themes outlined have clear implications for recruitment policy and practice, highlighting the need for organisations and policy makers to ensure that steps are taken within organisations to minimise the opportunity for bias within organisational processes, so that issues surrounding 'Social Mistreatment' such as being viewed as 'Suspicious' and 'Idle' are directly addressed to avoid errors in organisational recruitment and selection decision-making. Secondly, whilst many organisations in 2018 offer training with regard to recruitment processes, equality and diversity, this research suggests a need for wider training. Such training should specifically explore the 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers', both unconscious and conscious, and the importance of valuing diversity throughout the organisation, specifically with regard to caregiving fathers. Finally, the 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers' impacts on the performance management approach within organisations and it is suggested that exploring this issue through the appraisal process might have an impact of reduction of the 'Social Mistreatment' which was reported to often emerge in a covert manner. Such interventions are believed to be central to the reduction of the 'Social Mistreatment' that emerged within this study and that has been reported in previous studies.

It is proposed that each sub-theme of 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers' observed in this study can be offered as potential explanations for the lower ratings of the caregiving father in the online vignette, albeit to varying degrees. Nevertheless, wider research in many of the areas will be required, as it is unrealistic to make wider generalisations given the constraints on the sample identified in this study. Additionally, it has been proposed that the fear of facing 'Social Mistreatment' and the actual mistreatment itself may impact upon the likelihood of fathers undertaking working arrangements conducive to caregiving and it is suggested this might push them towards maintenance of breadwinning norms in an attempt to either avoid it, or as a consequence of it.

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has discussed the findings of the mixed methods design utilising quantitative and qualitative data to provide insights into the experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers in UK workplaces. Central to this discussion has been outlining the synergies between the data from this study and existing research which is largely US based and predominately utilising student participants. The data has offered many potential explanations for the lower ratings of the caregiving father in the online vignette and provided explanations for the prevalence of fathers in the role of breadwinner, despite the societal changes as outlined in chapters one to four. It is maintained that the chapter has established several contributions to knowledge and addressed the research questions in detail through use of a model, represented in Figure 8. The key contributions of this study are:

- UK fathers are less likely to obtain a role that facilitates caregiving than mothers. This effect was observable across all measures of 'hireability', 'promotability', and 'perceived competence' and 'workplace commitment'.
- It was found that mothers are associated with children regardless of caregiving status, an occurrence which was identified as 'Think Child - Think Mum', an association which does not occur for fathers.
- This study identified how 'Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers' and it was highlighted, that support was obtained via negotiation. The conditional nature of workplace support for fathers was considered to be a new conceptualization of the workplace experience for caregiving fathers.
- The 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers' was observed to emerge in this study with such fathers facing 'suspicion', 'mockery', 'negative judgement' and 'struggling with friendships' and conceptions of idleness.

The quantitative data showed that part-time father applicants consistently obtained the lowest ratings, and this finding is contrary to existing North American literature which observed fathers navigate the workplace through receipt of 'benefits' and 'premiums'. However, in other ways, the data supports existing North American literatures which observed workplace penalties for individuals who challenge norms of behaviour. Here, the literature demonstrates that accessing pathways to combining family and work life can be more complex for men than for women. This was specifically explored in more depth in the qualitative data. The evidence demonstrates that whilst its extent varied, the part-time father applicant was consistently rated lower against all measures. This provides new insights regarding the nature of the gender stereotyping of caregiving fathers which could inform

Government and organisational policy, workplace training, and performance management systems with a view to minimising unconscious or conscious bias. It is acknowledged that this is a relatively small sample broadly based in the South of England and with a particular South-West bias. Further research is needed with a wider geographic and a larger sample to ascertain if the same effect emerges. This will be particularly important to explore the impact of a more diverse sample with regard to religion, race and ethnicity to discover how these social differences might impact. Similarly, areas with different economic activity levels as well as sectoral differences ought to be explored to see if certain industry norms affect views and outcomes.

Each of the themes and sub-themes within the qualitative data provided much needed detail regarding the potential rationale for the lower ratings for the caregiving father in the online vignette and the dominance of breadwinner father role within UK families.

The theme of 'Think Child - Think Mum' demonstrated how there is often an automatic association between mothers and children, which can result in caregiving fathers often facing "Where is Mum?" commentary and issues surrounding perceptions of 'Unconventionality'. Similarly, sub-themes were conceptualised as a potential explanation for the continued alignment of fathers and the breadwinning role, offering explanation for why there was such disparity between the rating of the caregiving father (applying for part-time work) and the other working parents in the online vignette. The study has in some ways affirmed existing theoretical understanding which positions mothers as primary carers while caregiving fathers are

conceptualised as secondary and 'unconventional' carers. This can create challenges for fathers with caregiving responsibilities, supporting existing literature surrounding role congruity and gender stereotyping. This finding also advances the debate through positioning 'unconventionality' as both a proposed deterrent to fathers moving away from a position of breadwinning, as well as impacting upon the actual ratings received by the caregiving father in the online vignette. The notion of 'Where is Mum' has not been previously identified in the literature and is thus established as a potentially interesting area for further study and to explore if a revision of workplace codes of conduct would be an appropriate mechanism to reduce its effects.

The theme of 'Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving' can be seen to directly explain the lower ratings obtained by the caregiving father applicant in the online vignette, as, by its very nature, working part-time is viewed as a key way to support parents in the workplace, but appears to currently be conceptualised by employers as a way to support mothers in the workplace. This potentially contributes to negative perceptions of fathers applying for part-time work. It was proposed that this perception of less support or less actual support might preclude fathers from pathways which are conducive to caregiving responsibilities and explain the dominance of fathers in full-time work. This supports existing theory and also provides nuanced insights as to its nature and impact through emphasising the need for gender neutrality in workplace policy and practice to support parents, or indeed any workers with responsibility for caregiving, such as for elderly relatives or caring for disabled children for example.

Similarly, the sub-theme of 'Workplace Support for Caregiving is Conditional' adds new knowledge in this area, as the impact of conditionality and the identification of the circumstances in which support is obtained does not currently exist in the UK work and family literature, and thus offers advancement. It is recommended that wider research into the issue of conditionality and the circumstances in which support is obtained is undertaken to increase equality for parents in the workplace through reducing the disparities observable in this study.

The final theme that emerged from the qualitative data was the notion of the 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers' which provided numerous explanations for the lower ratings of the caregiving father in the online vignette, some of which were unique, some of which built on existing knowledge. The concept of caregiving fathers facing 'Social Mistreatment' has emerged previously in studies in the US with student participants, however, this study builds on this by providing and expanding knowledge with regard to the nature of the 'Social Mistreatment' in a UK context with working parents and managers as participants. Implications for workplace policy and practice are suggested, such as the need for unconscious bias training within organisations to include the 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers' to increase equality within organisations. 'Social Mistreatment' was offered as potential explanation for both the lower ratings of the caregiving father in the online vignette and for the dominance of the model of fathers as family breadwinners. Firstly, it was proposed that caregiving fathers face 'Social Mistreatment' when applying for roles that facilitate caregiving and thus receive lower scores than their female counterparts. Secondly, it was proposed that in an attempt to avoid 'Social Mistreatment' caregiving

fathers may shy away from roles than facilitate caregiving in favour of roles that are consistent with breadwinning.

This study has provided many potential explanations for the remaining dominance of the breadwinner father model, despite numerous political and societal shifts. This has been achieved through an in depth exploration of how contemporary UK fathers are perceived in the workplace, represented in Figure 8. However, it is acknowledged that this study has limitations and there are some shortcomings in its design and data collection methods, which are important to acknowledge as potentially influencing factors upon the results. This, along with areas for future research will be explored in the final chapter of this study, the conclusions.

## **Chapter Nine - Conclusions**

The final chapter of this study concludes the study, building on the discussion in chapter eight, reiterating the key findings and contributions to knowledge in the work and family arena and synthesising the key points. This chapter also recommends directions for future research and explores the limitations of this study. These conclusions give further consideration to the practical implications of the findings to workplace practices in the fields of human resource management, equality and diversity as well as management in a more general sense and wider policy implications.

This chapter starts with exploring how effectively the study met its overall aim of exploring the experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers in contemporary employment and the specific research questions. Namely, how are caregiving fathers rated when applying for working arrangements which facilitate an active role in caregiving, what lies behind these ratings and exploring the potential emerging explanations for the continued dominance of fathers in the role of 'breadwinner' for their families. The chapter continues to explore areas of improvement in the methodological design that are recommended to be amended for future research.



## **Key Findings, Contributions and Implications**

The data that emerged from the online vignette showed unequivocally that prejudice exists towards fathers with caregiving responsibilities and this was observed in the results chapter. This finding in a UK context confirms existing and dominant US literatures as discussed in the previous chapters, through exploration of the work of Doucet (2006), Doucet and Merla (2007), Rudman and Mescher (2013) and Berdahl and Moon 2013, to name a few. However, the findings further challenge the discourse which suggests that fathers who juggle work and childcare will receive benefits from doing so because apparent sanctions, such as lower ratings, are observable (Loh, 1996; Cuddy et al, 2004; Correll et al 2007; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013). The execution of this research in a UK context has enabled not only a deployment of theoretical foundations in a non-US setting, but importantly offered clarity about the scarcity of work of this kind in existing UK work and family literature. The study findings provide wider knowledge of the potential nature of discrimination that exists for caregiving fathers and how this manifests in the workplace. Such knowledge can have a key part to play in the reduction of such prejudice in the workplace, informing both policy and practices.

The data, through exploration of EMM, illustrated consistency in the lower ratings of the caregiving father across all of the dependant variables of 'promotability', 'hireability', 'workplace commitment' and 'perceived competence', with fathers who conformed to the breadwinner ideology of working full-time observed to fare better in the ratings than those who elect to work part-time. Such findings are consistent with role congruity and gender stereotyping literatures which advocate that those who

conform face rewards, whilst those who deviate face penalties (Eagly and Karau, 2002; and Luzadis, Wesolowski and Snively, 2008). However, these findings challenge the existing North American discourse that advocates the existence of 'fatherhood benefits' (Loh, 1996; Hersch and Stratton 2000; Cuddy, Fiske and Glick, 2004; Correll et al 2007; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013) implying that UK managers and working parents (in the main) perceive caregiving fathers against the measures of 'promotability', 'hireability', 'workplace commitment' and 'perceived competence' in a different way to studies that have mainly involved US students. For some of the variables in this study, support could be found, at least in part, in the less prominent UK literature (such as the 'fatherhood penalty' indicated in Working Families, in 2018) however, such UK literatures do not fully explain the differentials. This was particularly true for the variable of 'hireability' which saw fatherhood impact negatively upon the ratings of both the caregiving and the more traditional father. Therefore, a repeat of the online vignette is necessary to investigate if the same effect is observable in a larger, more diverse sample. The practice and policy implications for these findings are numerous and outlined in detail in Chapter Eight. Most notable was the need to review existing organisational policies in relation to performance management, recruitment and selection to ensure that managers involved in these practices are aware of the risks of workplace discrimination towards caregiving fathers. It was suggested that potentially this could be achieved through widening the remit of organisational unconscious bias training to include discrimination against caregiving fathers.

The data gathered through the vignette based focus groups and semi-structured interviews offered potential explanations for the lower ratings given to caregiving

fathers and the continued adherence to breadwinning norms through identification of three overarching themes; 'Think Child - Think Mum', 'Fathers Obtain Less Support for Caregiving Than Mothers' and the 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers'. The first of these 'Think Child - Think Mum' contained sub-themes of 'Unconventionality' and "Where is Mum?" which enabled further understanding of experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers. It is proposed that an automatic alignment between mother and child can have many implications within the workplace, particularly for caregiving fathers, including being perceived as 'unconventional'. It is suggested that a manager's inability to reconcile an application from a caregiving father with pre-existing expectations regarding exclusive maternal associations with caregiving, offers explanation for the lower ratings received by caregiving fathers, creating a barrier for such fathers when attempting to move away from breadwinning conventions. As with previous findings from the quantitative data, this finding indicates that organisations may need to specifically address the discrimination faced by caregiving fathers through training and organisational policy to ensure that managers are aware of the risk of bias with regard to conceptualisations of 'unconventionality'. The sub-theme of 'Unconventionality' has previously been identified in US research with student participants (Heilman et al, 2004; Heilman and Okimoto, 2007; and Heilman and Wallen, 2010), however, this UK based study, with managers and working parents as participants, can be seen to advance theoretical debate in this area through both demonstrating its prevalence and providing a more nuanced understanding.

Whilst the sub-theme of "Where is Mum?" does not offer explanations for the ratings assigned to the caregiving father in the online vignette, it does offer directions for

future research and inform academic debate in this area. The concept of “Where is Mum?” has not been specifically identified in the existing work and family literature and therefore offers new directions for both debate and workplace policy and practice. Specifically, this concept might have an impact on the nature of social exchanges within workplaces as most of the examples given in these data did not appear to be positioned to intentionally cause offence. However, the data indicated that such comments did affect how caregiving fathers conceptualised their involvement in caregiving through placing them in a secondary position. It is essential that this issue is further explored with a larger sample to ascertain more information regarding its nature and, if it does impact upon the decisions caregiving fathers make regarding working patterns and adherence to breadwinning norms as these data suggest.

The second theme that emerged from the data was identified as ‘Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving’ and was offered as a direct explanation for the lower ratings of the caregiving father in the online vignette. Such as finding supports the existing academic literature in this area (Crompton, 2002; Smith and Stokoe, 2005; and Tracey and Rivera, 2010), advancing the debate through offering a more nuanced understanding of the nature of this purported reduced support, as viewed by managers and working parents. The importance of gender neutrality in access to workplace support for parents is suggested as having a key role in the reduction of workplace disparities and may require revisions of workplace policy and increased management training regarding bias, either unconscious or conscious. It is possible that caregiving fathers might not request support due to the perception that they would not receive it and thus a self-fulfilling

prophecy situation emerges. It was suggested that there was a need to conduct further investigation in this area of reduced support, exploring both its nature and its impact.

Within this overarching theme a sub-theme of 'Workplace Support for Caregiving Fathers is Conditional' was presented which emphasised the contingent nature of workplace support for caregiving fathers. It is argued that this sub-theme makes a unique contribution as it has not been previously identified in the work and family literature. The data here present further nuanced insights regarding the circumstances in which caregiving fathers obtain support and thus provides a rationale for the lower rating of the caregiving father in the online vignette. This perception, or reality, that workplace support will be challenging to obtain offers a potential explanation for the maintenance of breadwinner norms, and thus highlights the need for more proactivity from both organisations and policy makers in this area.

Such proactivity at an organisational level may include wider promotion of the gender neutrality of workplace support for caregiving, including the taking of SPL and utilising flexible working. This may also involve role modelling from the top of the organisation to communicate the acceptability of fathers acknowledging caregiving responsibilities. At a broader, government level, this could include a legislative requirement for more specific recording of the workplace support offered (such as flexible working) and requested by parents in the workplace to allow for it to be monitored and any gender disparities tackled. It is necessary for a larger study over a longer period of time to be executed in order to fully understand the role 'conditionality' plays in the maintenance of fathers in working patterns that align to

breadwinning. Further study would also obtain deeper understanding regarding its nature and impact.

The third and final theme that emerged from the qualitative data was identified to be the 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers'. This theme was proposed to offer both a potential explanation for the ratings assigned to the caregiving father in the online vignette and a potential explanation also for the adherence of fathers to the breadwinner model rather than to alternative pathways which are more considered to be more conducive to caregiving. It builds upon the existing knowledge from the US regarding the mistreatment of caregiving fathers (such as Berdahl and Moon, 2013) and adds to this knowledge through identifying five types of 'Social Mistreatment' experienced by UK fathers through the lens of working parents and managers. Some of the sub-themes have been previously identified in the work and family literature (Wayne and Cordiero, 2003; Brescoll and Ulman, 2005; and Berdahl and Moon, 2013) and the contribution of this study is to enhance knowledge in this area, in a UK context with managers and working parents as participants. The notion that caregiving fathers are viewed with 'Suspicion' has not emerged previously for caregiving fathers, only fathers who were classified as 'stay at home fathers' ( Doucet and Merla, 2007; Doucet, 2009) and therefore can be considered as contributing new knowledge. The data also suggested that both actual 'Social Mistreatment' and the fear of facing 'Social Mistreatment' can act as a dual force impacting upon the likelihood of fathers undertaking working arrangements conducive to caregiving. This suggests these forces might push fathers towards maintaining breadwinning norms in an attempt to avoid 'Social Mistreatment'. Further investigation is required into this notion to establish if such proposed forces have the impact that this research has

suggested. As with previous findings, the 'Social Mistreatment' of caregiving fathers highlights the necessity for employment policies to be reviewed to ensure that any caregiving fathers facing such workplace mistreatment have a clear route for support and that the potential for mistreatment is minimised. Naturally, central to this is the education of employers and staff regarding the existence and nature of the 'Social Mistreatment' of caregiving fathers.

In a more general sense, this study has made a number of wider contributions that are not specific to the individual findings as outlined above. The wider knowledge provided by this study regarding the experiences and perceptions of caregiving fathers and the relationship between these and the maintenance of breadwinning norms enhances existing knowledge which largely advocates that parenthood has differing impacts within the workplace on mothers compared to fathers. Such a differential in impact has been widely proposed to have an intrinsic role to play in the maintenance of the gender pay gap, as outlined in chapter one. Furthermore, this study has contributed nuanced insights into understanding the low take-up of shared parental leave in the UK and it is proposed that this can be conceptualised as having a potential central role in the continuation of breadwinner mentalities. It has been suggested that the findings of this study have highlighted that not only does discrimination occur for caregiving fathers, but also the way in which this manifests in the workplace. To enable this to be reduced the result of this study need to be disseminated through government committee's (such as the Fathers at Work Select Committee) and employer forums (such as Working Families / Fatherhood Institute network) to inform stakeholders of the risks in this area with a view to steps being taken to minimise the discrimination. As indicated above, this may range from an

amendment to the Equality Act (2010) to include 'parental status' as a protected characteristic at a national level, to the extension of the remit of unconscious bias training at an organisational level.

The study also has implications regarding discrimination in a broader sense for both academic research and for the way in which workplaces manage discrimination. This research has consistently demonstrated that caregiving fathers face varying types of discrimination, the acknowledgement of which appears to remain underdeveloped when compared to the discrimination discourse of race, sexuality and gender in a general sense. Thus, this study has potential implications for how fathers as employees are conceptualised and treated within the workplace and it is suggested that further research is undertaken with a larger, more varied sample to explore if the discrimination that emerged in this study continues to exist. Critical to the impact of this study is wide dissemination of the results of the study at macro and micro levels to raise awareness of the perceptions and experiences of caregiving fathers and ultimately minimise any discrimination.

Overall, the findings of this study can be observed to expand existing knowledge in this area through providing unique insights into the perceptions and experiences of and about UK caregiving fathers, many of which have not been previously identified. However, this study is not without imperfections and it is important to establish and acknowledge the critiques of this study and to signpost potential future areas of research.



## **Limitations and Areas of Future Research**

There are many ways in which this study could have been improved and potential limitations with the data collected, and this chapter now charts these in detail. It begins with embarking on a critique of the sample in a more general sense, followed by an exploration of the limitations in the design of online vignette instrument itself followed by the vignette based focus groups and semi-structured interviews. As the limitations are outlined, areas of future research are proposed.

### **Sample**

Before exploring the limitations of these data in depth and by type it is appropriate to begin with an exploration of challenges within the data in a more general sense, the most significant of which concerns the sample composition. The sample for this study was narrow in a number of ways and the nature of arising limitations varied between the types of data.

For both data sets there was a predominance of participants located in the South West of England due to the location of the researcher and her predominantly South West contacts. The majority of focus groups and interviews also took place within this region of the UK. The South West is characterised by comparatively low average working hours, a largely White British population, high employment levels and lower levels of pay because of heavy reliance on a tourism economy and therefore is not claimed to be representative of the UK more generally. Consequently, a larger study

encompassing a more geographical diverse sample is critical to ascertain if the same results emerge in more affluent, ethnically diverse regions.

It is important to note that all of the data gathering in this study was from participants who volunteered to partake in the research doing so in the knowledge that the research interest was in gender stereotyping. Yet, even in this well-defined context, descriptions such as he is “*work shy*” and “*a bit weird*” were commonplace when describing caregiving fathers. It is plausible that many other employees who might hold stronger views regarding caregiving fathers would not put themselves forward for such research and thus the findings of this study can be conceptualised as potentially ‘a tip of the iceberg’. Conversely, it may be the case that fathers who volunteered to participate may have had particularly negative workplace experiences that they felt motivated to share (Gomez and Trierweiler, 2001). Consequently, further exploration of the perceptions and experiences of caregiving fathers, ideally recruited through utilisation of a more opaque description is imperative to fully understand if the linkages made between perceptions of caregiving fathers and discrimination, is an accurate reflection of practice.

Specific to the online vignette, demographics such as age, ethnic origin and marital status were not controlled for and might have had an impact on the differentials in ratings between the caregiving father and the other three fictitious applicants. To ensure that such factors were not related to the results, it is suggested that a wider sample is obtained and additional demographic questions added to this part of the study to enable these demographic factors to be controlled for and for to see if they impact upon received ratings.

Similarly, for the focus groups and interviews, the sample was imbalanced in places, not by design but due to participant availability. There was a dominance of mothers in the manager interviews (twelve female managers to three male managers) and a dominance of male managers in the focus groups (seventeen men to ten females), with more balance existing in the working parent interviews (eleven fathers to ten mothers). With regard to marital status, interview participants were predominantly married heterosexual, white- British, cohabitating or married parents.. It is not known to what extent these findings would differ if the sample was more varied, more representative of modern UK society and thus more stratified. It was beyond the scope of this study to explore this. However, future research utilising a sample that is more representative of the UK working population would be required, especially with regard to family composition. This is of particular importance and should consider the potential of intersectionality as a lens for uncovering further influencing factors.

### **Online Vignette**

There are a number of ways in which the online vignette could have been improved and future research which overcomes these design issues is recommended. For example, randomising the order of the presentation of the vignettes might have had an impact on the outcomes. Similarly, the explanation given about the purpose of the research might have had an impact on the standpoint taken by the participants, they were advised that the research was looking at “Bias during the Selection Process”. Due to the issues surrounding ‘Think Child - Think Mum’ as identified earlier, it is possible this might have resulted in an assumption that the study was about working

mothers and thus participants may have been favourable in their rating of this population. Whilst these factors might act as potential explanations for the consistently higher rating of the fictitious mother applicants, compared to the caregiving father applicant, it does not explain the consistent disparities between the caregiving father applicant and the full-time father applicant. Thus, in the context of research ethics being of central concern, further research with a repeated vignette study containing a more opaque description of the research would be appropriate to avoid the possibility of participants attempting to match their responses to their perception of the purpose of the experiment. Additionally, it would be interesting to introduce more diversity in the vignettes, such as use of non white names and same sex parents, to explore any potential implications of this on applicant ratings.

Whilst there are ways in which the online vignette could have been improved, the shortcomings outlined above do not appear to be significant enough to suggest that the consistently lower ratings for caregiving fathers were not an accurate reflection of how such fathers are perceived in the workplace.

### **Vignette Based Focus Groups**

Whilst the focus group data provided valuable insights into management perceptions of caregiving fathers, there is a possibility that the quality of the data was influenced by the organisation of the focus groups. Primarily, the sizing of the focus groups which was variable throughout the study due to participant availability and created challenges at either end of the scale. For the larger focus groups, with over ten participants, the discussion often digressed from the vignettes, requiring interjection

from the researcher with not all participants taking an active role. For the smaller focus groups, with under three participants, it was challenging for the participants to generate a detailed debate and the researcher needed to interject with questions to create a wider discussion. Whilst this is not anticipated to have had an impact on the outcomes of this study, a repeat of this study with greater equality in sizing, aiming for around five participants per focus group, would be appropriate to ensure this did not impact upon the results.

### **Semi Structured Interviews**

The final limitations of this study relate to the interview data. Firstly, during the interviews there was not an opportunity for an exploration of the participant's individual construction of parenthood, this was not asked for. With hindsight, it is possible that such questioning might have elicited responses that would provide valuable insights into the way in which participants approach work and working, thus shedding light on the role that constructions of parenting plays in the working arrangements of caregiving fathers. Secondly, the data obtained from the interviews was self-reported, and it is impossible to be certain that participants are not selective in their recall of events. Whilst the researcher is an experienced interviewer, it is not possible to be able to guarantee that this did not occur and that attribution errors in the relay of events did not occur. Thirdly, the gender of the researcher might have had an impact on the data obtained from the interviews and the participants may have been trying to match the responses they anticipated the researcher to be seeking. The challenges of self-reporting research and the potential for recall and attribution errors may be ongoing issues in this field of research, indicating that care must

continue to be taken in the accurate reporting of the circumstances and contexts of data collection. Future research incorporating questions regarding constructions of parenthood and varying the gender, or indeed ethnicity of the interviewer would be appropriate to overcome the limitations of the interviews in this research.

More generally, many statements have been made within the reporting of research regarding the continuation of fathers in working arrangements that align with breadwinning norms and the data presented appears to hold some potential explanations for the low ratings of the caregiving father in the online vignette. However this study is cross-sectional in nature, which makes assigning causality impossible. Therefore, it is suggested that a further study to explore the relationship between the experience and perception of caregiving fathers and the continued dominance of the breadwinning model is undertaken utilising a longitudinal methodology. Such a methodology would be able to establish if the tentative links made in this research can be substantiated enabling more confident assertions of causality.

## **Chapter Summary**

In conclusion, this study has satisfactorily addressed the aim, provided answers to the research questions and contributed knowledge in the following ways. Firstly, it has found that caregiving fathers are discriminated against when applying for work whilst having caregiving responsibilities, obtaining the lowest ratings when compared to both part-time and full-time working parent scenarios. Secondly, the study has offered explanations for the comparatively lower ratings of the caregiving father,

through the themes of 'Think Child - Think Mum', Fathers Obtain less Workplace Support than Mothers for Caregiving and the 'Social Mistreatment of Caregiving Fathers'. Finally, such themes are proposed to offer justification for the continued dominance of the role of fathers as breadwinner for their families, despite a widely advocated belief that societal expectations of fathers have shifted away from this model.

Whilst much research exists in the US and Canada regarding the experience of caregiving fathers, there is a paucity of such research in the UK and this study has attempted to address this. In providing insights and knowledge, building on theories of fatherhood benefit, motherhood penalties, role congruity and gender stereotyping theory, this thesis has upheld the principles of doctoral level study. The views and beliefs of the researcher, is likely to impact on his or her methodology. Similarly, the researcher's own underlying assumptions of what it means to be a father is impossible to extract from the investigation.

Naturally, this study is not without its complexities and there are ways in which the study design could have been improved, however, this study has advanced debate in the work and family discourse regarding the perceptions of caregiving fathers in the workplace. It has been suggested here that further research, with greater diversity in participants to include wider variation in geography, ethnicity and family composition would ensure that the findings are more widely representative of perceptions of caregiving fathers across the UK.

This study has demonstrated that whilst the UK has addressed many aspects of discrimination in the workplace, the treatment of caregiving fathers remains largely unaddressed, despite significant societal change regarding the expectations of father involvement in parenting 2018. This issue needs to be addressed within organisations by managers, HR Managers and trade unionists to ensure that workplace policies address the issues that are highlighted by this study. On a more societal level, the issues raised in this study need to be addressed by policy makers at a Government level to redress the imbalances between mothers and fathers in the workplace regarding support for caregiving responsibilities, so that fathers who have such responsibilities can manage them alongside work without being disadvantaged or mistreated.



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## **Appendix 1**

### **Participant Instructions and Informed Consent- Focus Group Discussion**

Thank you for taking part in this focus group. Please find below all of the information you should need about the study.

#### **Study title:**

Exploration of bias during the selection process (full title to be provided after during the debrief)

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

The aim of this study is to generate knowledge regarding bias, the purpose of this knowledge generation is to offer potential explanations for judgements at the point of a selection with a view to minimisation of disparity in practice.

#### **Why have I been approached?**

For the purposes of the study I need to recruit participants who are involved in the recruitment and selection process. This is the only criteria that I have for recruiting people to the study, although I will also be interested to know if you are a parent and if you work on a full-time or part-time basis. However, these factors will not prevent you from taking part in the study.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you will need to sign a consent form to indicate you are willing to be a part of the study. Even after signing the form, however, you will be free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason before the data analyses commences on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017. A decision not to take part, withdraw part-way or after participation will not affect you in any way. Your

participant data will be destroyed should they withdraw, in accordance with best practice.

### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will take part in a focus group which will run for an hour. During this time you will be given 4 summaries of applicants to read and you will be asked to rate the applicants individually for a fictitious role and then to discuss the applicants in more detail with the other participants. You will be allowed to take a break between each task and refreshments will be available. The researcher will be running all of the sessions.

It is possible that following on from your participation in the focus group you will be asked additional questions through an interview, and this is also voluntary.

### **What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

Some of the tasks that you will be asked to perform you may find quite challenging and may feel uncomfortable if you tend to become self-conscious if you need to make a decision 'on the spot' or are unsure of your decision making. You can refuse to complete any of the tasks if you wish.

Another possible disadvantage of participating in the study is that you may feel a little tired at the end of the session. I would recommend that you do not arrange sessions on a day when you have a lot of meetings to attend. One final disadvantage is that you will need to give up your time on two, maybe three separate occasions, which may be difficult if you have to make special childcare, travel arrangements or have to rearrange work commitments.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

You will gain a greater understanding of recruitment and selection decision making which can inform your practice.

### **What if something goes wrong?**

If we have to cancel a session I will attempt to contact you as soon as possible using the method indicated by you on the consent form. If you change your mind about taking part in the study you can withdraw at any point during the session and at any time after that without giving a reason before the data analyses commences on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 by contacting me using the email address stated below. If you decide to withdraw all your data will be destroyed and will not be used in the study.

### **Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?**

Yes. Only I will have access to the raw data. All the consent forms will be stored in a separate, secure (locked) location from the raw data itself. You will only be identified on the score sheet by your participant code number. I will retain the primary research data securely for a period of ten years after the completion of a research project and after that point it will then be destroyed. When the data has been entered into a computer file, scores will only be associated with code number and access to the file will be password protected.

### **What will happen to the results of the research study?**

The results will be written up and presented as part of my PhD thesis. It may also be presented at academic conferences and / or written up for publication in peer reviewed academic journals.

### **Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research is organised by Jasmine Kelland, who is a PhD student at the post graduate school of Management at Plymouth University. This project is not externally funded.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

The Faculty of Management's Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this study.

Contact for Further Information - Jasmine Kelland,  
jasmine.kelland@plymouth.ac.uk.

**Statement of informed consent**

I have read the points above and give my informed consent for the information I have provided in this focus group to be used for the purposes stated AGREE / DISAGREE

Signed; \_\_\_\_\_ Date; \_\_\_\_\_ Full name

\_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

**Appendix 2 - Participant Instructions**  
**Online Vignette and Focus Group Discussion**

**Bias and Selection**

You are the Area Manager for High Street Bank and you are recruiting for a Customer Services Manager.

**Role Summary- Customer Service Manager - High Street Bank - Midshire Branch**

The role of Customer Service Manager at High Street Bank is to ensure that the needs of customers are being satisfied through promotion and provision of excellent customer service.

Customer Service Manager Key Responsibilities;

- investigating and solving customers' problems, which may be complex or long-standing problems that have been passed on by customer service assistants;
- developing customer complaints procedures, handling any complaints and issuing refunds or compensation if necessary
- writing reports analysing the customer service that your organisation provides
- being part of the management team with the purpose of improving customer service throughout the business
- management of the customer service team which includes, recruitment, training, appraisals
- keeping ahead of developments in customer service by reading relevant journals, going to meetings and attending courses, internal and external to the organisation

## **Part 1**

You are recruiting for a Part-Time (17.5 hours per week) Customer Services Manager. Please read these two summaries of job applicants. You will then be required to rate the suitability of each applicant for the Part-Time Customer Services Manager role and then describe the applicant according to the attached instructions.

### *Clare Smith*

Clare has five years' experience of being a Customer Service Manager. Prior to that she worked as a banking clerk. She is applying for this part-time job as she wants to improve her work life balance as it will enable her to spend more time with her two children; Jack and Sarah, age's 18 mths and three. Her experience as a Customer Service Manager was at Village Bank in Lowshire.

Her last appraisal ratings were excellent and she achieved five staff nominations for Manager of the year. She has been married to Adam for 5 years; he works as a PE Teacher at a local comprehensive school. Clare undertook her degree at Cardiff University in 2000 in English Literature. She is a great mother and really enjoys her work.

### *David Jones*

David has two years of experience of being a Customer Service Manager at the High Street Bank's Midshire Branch. Prior to that he worked in customer services in the

same bank. Like Clare he is applying for the part-time role as he wants to improve his work life balance and spend more time with his children, twin boys aged two. He has been married to Jane for 10 years and she works in Academia. He is well liked by his team and his colleagues. He graduated from University of Portsmouth in 1997 with a degree in History. He is a very dedicated dad as well as getting a lot of satisfaction from work.

### **Applicant Rating Form**

#### **Clare Smith**

Please rate Clare out of 10 for each rating factor.

Rating Factor	Score Out of 10 (10 being the highest and 1 being the lowest)
Perceived competence	
Workplace commitment	
Hireability	
Promotability	

#### **David Jones**

Please rate David out of 10 for each rating factor.

Rating Factor	Score Out of 10 (10 being the highest)
Perceived competence	
Workplace commitment	
Hireability	
Promotability	

\*Hireability is the measure of how hireable somebody is; how fit they are to be hired

\* Promotability is the suitability for being promoted

Please hand in to the researcher when you have completed the task



## **Part 2**

Both your part-time members of staff have left and you now have a vacancy for a full-time position (37.5 hours per week) for a Customer Services Manager (same role summary applies). As before, please read these two summaries of job applicants and then individually rate and describe each applicant.

### *Amelia Cawse*

Amelia has been Deputy Manager of the Customer Services Team at The National Bank for 7 years. She worked her way up from the role of Receptionist at the same bank that she joined upon graduation from Sheffield University where she studied Communications. She has a proven track record of success at the National Bank with good performance management ratings, from her peers, managers, subordinates and customers. She is applying for the role as she thinks it will be interesting and she likes to provide a good life for her family - husband Jacob, a school caretaker and children, Ava (24mths) and Oscar (6mths). Amelia says she loves being a working mum.

### *Oliver Williams*

Oliver is an internal applicant who has been working as the “acting” Customer Service manager at High Street Bank for the last 6 mths. He joined High Street bank after graduating in Business from Liverpool University and has held numerous jobs at the bank since then. His team won a recent award for customer service, voted for by Customers. He is married to Eva who is a university administrator and has two

children, Sienna (age 1) and Jessica (age 3). He is applying for the job to give his children and wife a better standard of living and being a working dad is important to him.

### **Applicant Rating Form**

#### **Amelia Cawse**

Please rate Amelia out of 10 for each rating factor.

Rating Factor	Score Out of 10 (10 being the highest)
Perceived competence	
Workplace commitment	
Hireability	
Promotability	

#### **Oliver Williams**

Please rate Oliver out of 10 for each rating factor.

Rating Factor	Score Out of 10 (10 being the highest)
Perceived competence	
Workplace commitment	
Hireability	
Promotability	

Please hand in to the researcher when you have completed the task

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Coding Strategy - Online Vignette**

Variable No	Variable Title	Variable Name	Values
1	identifier	Identifier	Manu (JM)
	Gender	Gender	male female
1	percptf	Rating Factor: Perceived Competence Part-Time Female Applicant	Score out of 10-10 being the highest, 1 being the lowest
	PercPTM	Rating Factor: Perceived Competence Part-Time male Applicant	Score out of 10-10 being the highest, 1 being the lowest
	PercFTF	Rating Factor: Perceived Competence Full-Time female Applicant	Score out of 10-10 being the highest, 1 being the lowest
	PercFTM	Rating Factor: Perceived Competence Full-Time male Applicant	Score out of 10-10 being the highest, 1 being the lowest

2	WCPTF	Rating Factor: Workplace Commitment Part-Time Female Applicant	Score out of 10- 10 being the highest, 1 being the lowest
	WC	Rating Factor: Workplace Commitment Part-Time male Applicant	Score out of 10- 10 being the highest, 1 being the lowest
	WC	Rating Factor: Workplace Commitment Full-Time Female Applicant	Score out of 10- 10 being the highest, 1 being the lowest
	WC	Rating Factor: Workplace Commitment Full-Time Male Applicant	Score out of 10- 10 being the highest, 1 being the lowest
3	Hireptf	Rating Factor: Hireability Part-Time Female Applicant	Score out of 10- 10 being the highest, 1 being the lowest
	hireptm	Rating Factor: Hireability Part-Time Male Applicant	Score out of 10- 10 being the highest, 1 being the lowest

	hireftf	Rating Factor: Hireability Full-Time Female Applicant	Score out of 10- 10 being the highest, 1 being the lowest
	hireftm	Rating Factor: Hireability Full-Time Male Applicant	Score out of 10- 10 being the highest, 1 being the lowest
	promptf	Rating Factor: Promotability Part-Time Female Applicant	Score out of 10- 10 being the highest, 1 being the lowest
	PromPTM	Rating Factor: Promotability Part-Time Male Applicant	Score out of 10- 10 being the highest, 1 being the lowest
	PromFTF	Rating Factor: Promotability Full-Time Female Applicant	Score out of 10- 10 being the highest, 1 being the lowest
	PromFTM	Rating Factor: Promotability Full-Time male Applicant	Score out of 10- 10 being the highest, 1 being the lowest

#### **Appendix 4**

##### **Detailed Descriptive Statistics - Online Vignette**

Gender - recoder		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
PROM-PTM	Female	7.15	1.592	26
	Male	6.84	1.581	56
	Total	6.94	1.582	82
PROM-FTM	Female	7.77	1.306	26
	Male	7.79	1.385	56
	Total	7.78	1.352	82
PROM-PTF	Female	7.62	1.856	26
	Male	7.43	1.463	56
	Total	7.49	1.589	82
PROM-FTF	Female	8.08	1.093	26
	Male	7.77	1.160	56
	Total	7.87	1.141	82
HIRE-PTM	Female	7.62	1.169	26
	Male	7.82	1.064	56
	Total	7.76	1.095	82
HIRE-FTM	Female	7.81	1.201	26
	Male	7.75	1.311	56
	Total	7.77	1.270	82

HIRE-PTF	Female	8.50	1.304	26
	Male	8.48	1.160	56
	Total	8.49	1.199	82
HIRE-FTF	Female	8.12	.952	26
	Male	8.05	.980	56
	Total	8.07	.966	82
WC-PTM	Female	7.54	1.334	26
	Male	7.43	1.319	56
	Total	7.46	1.317	82
WC-FTM	Female	7.92	1.547	26
	Male	7.95	1.166	56
	Total	7.94	1.290	82
WC-PTF	Female	8.00	1.744	26
	Male	7.61	1.580	56
	Total	7.73	1.633	82
WC-FTF	Female	8.19	1.059	26
	Male	8.14	1.167	56
	Total	8.16	1.127	82
PC-PTM	Female	7.65	1.018	26
	Male	7.34	1.149	56
	Total	7.44	1.112	82
PC-FTM	Female	8.00	1.233	26
	Male	7.73	1.120	56
	Total	7.82	1.156	82

PC-PTF	Female	8.58	1.172	26
	Male	8.41	1.172	56
	Total	8.46	1.167	82
PC-FTF	Female	7.96	.999	26
	Male	7.84	1.092	56
	Total	7.88	1.059	82



## **Appendix – 5**

### **Sample Characteristics – Semi-Structured Interviews – Working Parents**

Allocated Participant Name	Parental and Caregiving Status	Number of Children and Working Hour
David	Caregiving mother	3 children, works full-time, married to a part-time wife
Paul	Caregiving father	1 child, divorced, works part-time
James	Caregiving father	2 children, worked part-time before children at school, married to a full-time wife
Emma	Mother, married to a caregiving father	2 children, works full-time, married to a part-time husband
Tom	Father, dual caregiving	2 children, works full-time, married to a full-time wife, worked part-time for a period
Sue	Caregiving mother	2 children, works full-time, partner works part-time
Luby	Mother, dual caregiving	2 children, both parents work full-time

Sid	Caregiving father	4 children, works as a part-time writer, wife works full-time
Stephanie	Mother, dual caregiving	2 children, works part-time, married to a husband who works flexibly
Lyn	Mother, dual caregiving	2 children, works full-time, married to a husband who is full-time
Kelly	Mother, married to a caregiving father	1 child, works full-time, husband works part-time
Caitlin	Mother, married to a caregiving father	2 children, works full-time, married to a stay at home father
Jane	Caregiving mother	1 child, divorced, works part-time
Corey	Father, dual caregiving	3 children, father and mother work full-time
Rick	Caregiving father	2 children, works part-time, wife works full-time
Terry	Father, dual caregiving (caregiving father for a period)	1 child, works full-time, wife works full-time but took extended SPL,
Barry	Caregiving father	2 children, works flexibly, mother works full-time

Malcolm	Caregiving father	1 child, works part-time , divorced
Adrian	Caregiving mother	1 child, works full-time, mother works part-time
Cerys	Mother, dual caregiving	2 children, both parents work full-time
Liv	Mother, dual caregiving	1 child, works part-time, married to a part-time husband

## **Appendix 6**

### **Sample Characteristics – Semi-Structured Interviews - Managers**

Allocated Participant Name	Job Role
Sam	Line Manager, NHS
Dave	Line manager, Naval Organisation
Clare	HR manager, Technology Organisation
Sophie	Line manager, NHS
Lois	Team manager, NHS
Simone	HR Manager, University
Samantha	HR Manager, NHS
Jon	HR Manager, Naval Organisation
Amy	Cancer Nurse Team Leader
Laura	Team Leader, NHS
Katie	Manager, Healthcare Organisation
Jenny	HR and Operations Manager, Housing Charity
Mark	Senior Manager, Public Sector
Caren	Line Manager, Healthcare Organisation
Helen	Manager at a Recruitment Agency

## **Appendix 7**

### **Example of a Semi-Structured Interview Transcript - 'James'**

Interviewer: Thanks ever so much for doing this, I really appreciate it. I know it's the end of a really long day.

WPJP: That's all right.

Interviewer: It should take about ten minutes, if that's all right. I've just got some questions I want to go through. It's particularly exploring gender stereotypes in employment and I'm particularly looking at parents. Are you happy for me to record?

WPJP: Yes, of course.

Interviewer: Okay. So could you just tell me a bit about your family set-up?

WPJP: Well there's myself and my wife. We both work full-time now, I worked part-time up until the boys went to school. We have two boys. One is at secondary school, in his first year there. He's 11. And the other is in year 3. He's 7 years old.

Interviewer: Okay. And what are your working arrangements?

WPJP: We both work full-time now. We're both teachers, both at the same school, and that's it really.

Interviewer: So what sort of time do you start in the morning? What time do you finish?

WPJP: Around eight o'clock we start and finish... it can be anything from four till six, seven o'clock if there are parents' evenings, seven, seven-thirty, that type of time.

Interviewer: Yes. And is it Monday to Friday?

WPJP: It is, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, and are you happy with your working arrangements?

WPJP: Yes, in terms of the children?

Interviewer: Yeah.

WPJP: Yes, fairly happy with it, a lot happier than it has been in the past when they were younger, but it's levelled out to the point now where we've got into a routine that we all seem to understand and just work a little bit more automatically.

Interviewer: Yeah, and so you said it's easier than it had been before. What was tricky about it before?

WPJP: Well when the boys were younger we lived further away from work and had to drop them off at a childminder's very early in the morning and often had to drive back quite a distance back home again to pick them up, sometimes fairly late from the childminder's. So it was a bit stressful for everybody concerned, not least the children because they were spending long days at school or in childcare and then in the afternoons with a childminder and not so much with us.

Interviewer: Yes. During that time, did you feel that you had any sort of judgement from colleagues about your working arrangements?

WPJP: Not strictly from colleagues, no, but not that I know about. But some people could be fairly judgemental or at least seemed to be fairly judgemental about the working arrangement, typically the older generation, typically sort of our parents' generation would be a bit quicker to judgement than people that are our contemporaries.

Interviewer: Yes, so kind of family and friends sort of...?

WPJP: Yeah, family and friends or just people of that particular generation, if there were people that we knew, they'd be more likely to be not overly critical but I think sometimes the criticism would be there. If not kind of overt then it would be suggested criticism.

Interviewer: And how would it sort of manifest itself?

WPJP: Just in terms of asking questions about the arrangements really, of asking why one of us wouldn't stay at home, for example, not necessarily understanding that it was something that was necessary, just possibly thinking that it was something that we chose.

Interviewer: What do you think is the most challenging part of being a family of working parents?

WPJP: I would say it's probably a matter of just fitting in the time really or just having the time, because with younger children particularly, you have a very busy day and you either put them to school or with childminders. You go to work and when you come back, you can't just drop everything and spend time with them. You obviously have to do all those things that everybody has to do, you know, get your house in order, do the washing up, wash up the breakfast things and all of the chores really that you would have to do anyway regardless of whether you're at work or not. And sometimes if you're getting home at a fairly late hour and those things still have to be done, you're not getting too much time to spend with the children before you have to pack them off to bed for school the next day.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay.

WPJP: So it feels like a very condensed amount of time that you actually get to spend with them.

Interviewer: Yeah, and how do you kind of manage that as a family?

WPJP: Well I don't know if it's a case of how we manage it, it's just that you have to really. It's one of those things that because it's just a fact of life, it's one of those things that you have to get through. I think because we have quite good holidays, because we have sort of extended periods off at the same time as them, we manage to make up for it a little bit by being able to spend a lot more time with them in half terms and over kind of Easter, Christmas period, summer holidays, things like that.

Interviewer: Yeah.

WPJP: Obviously the weekend we try to fit as much as possible in together.

Interviewer: Mmm, that's brilliant. Is there anything else you'd like to add on this topic?

WPJP: I'd say that initially, when our eldest son was very young, I was still at university and my wife was at work and working full-time because she was a teacher and I was not yet one. Obviously she was the person that made most of the money and she sort of was the main breadwinner. And during that time, as well as studying, I had to spend a couple of days a week as the kind of stay at home parent as well. I think that that was, in some people, particularly probably other parents of around our age, that was seen as a sort of unusual thing, not like it was frowned upon or anything, it was just less normal to see a male parent providing most of the childcare to a young baby. Often like maybe toddlers and slightly older children perhaps, but with a very young baby it wasn't something that was seen quite as readily. I think it was something that although not really sneered at and not, like I say, frowned upon, it was probably something that wasn't considered to be quite normal, which, although I didn't particularly mind, it's something that can get to you a little bit.

Interviewer: Yes.



WPJP: And I don't know if it feels like particularly emasculating or anything, but it did get to me a little over a period of time, like I say, when our eldest was a very young baby.

Interviewer: Mmm, and how did it sort of manifest itself? Was it kind of comments or more looks or...?

WPJP: Comments, yes. I can't really think of any specific comments, but I was often asked, "Where's Jacob's mother?" things like that. And although they weren't barbed in any way, I could tell that they were kind of meant to be ... I'm not entirely sure what I'm trying to say there. Although they were just supposedly innocent questions, I think that there was a bit more of a point to them. (Laughter)

Interviewer: Okay. Thanks ever so much for that.

WPJP: That's all right.

[End of Transcript]

## **Appendix 8**

### **Example of a Focus Group Transcript – NHS - Part-Time Vignette**

- TB6: Shall I write? What are the strengths of Clare? You'd think coming up from banking clerk to customer services manager might give you breadth of skills and knowledge and she might have some understanding of this.
- TB2: Yes just not as much exposure potentially but we should ...
- TB6: So the key strengths of recruiting her are ... experience.
- TB4: Yes, 5 years' experience.
- TB6: Perhaps coming up through the ranks is a strength.
- TB5: Yes, working your way up gives you some corporate history in terms of.
- TB4: Worked as bank clerk previously.
- TB6: Strengths are she is obviously good at her job.
- TB5: Very likeable.
- TB4: Yep.
- TB6: I'd say she was approachable.
- TB5: I put approachable, you don't get those sort of commendations from colleagues unless you are.
- TB6: Team player that would imply she is approachable put forward for those awards so it goes a long way in management.
- TB2: That's it, there is nothing there.
- TB4/TB6: No.
- TB5: You make the assumption they are both quite intelligent, they both have degrees.
- TB2: Yeah.
- TB6: The drawbacks could be previous experience at Village Bank.
- TB1: Not sure how small it is, it implies its small because...
- TB5: In terms of responsibility, it is half-time isn't, you know if you are leading the team, that is quite ... that goes for both jobs ... but with her ... both have desire to look after family as much you just think it is in there somewhere with looking forward and looking for Promotability all those sort of factors.

TB4: Yeh, I thought that might be a bit of an issue.

TB5: That's the same for both of them.

TB6: Children do grow though.

TB4: They do, they do.

TB3: She could be, well both of them could be, consolidating their foundation.

TB5: I suppose the assumption is mums look after children but that is not as easy to call these days is it.

TB4: No.

TB6: I mean, I like the idea she has recognised herself, that she wants to get her home-work-life balance, I think that it's a strength, I like that she recognised it herself rather than hit this as a stress or what have you, also as a manager if that work home life balance is important to her, it will be important to staff as well.

TB5: It will be important to her staff as well.

TB6: Her children are young, and it must have been hard working full-time with that but I wouldn't, err, use that against her.

TB4: Yep, Yep.

TB2: It not clear if she is still working?

TB5: No it isn't.

TB2: I think that was the bit I was unsure of - has she had children and then a break – is she going back to work? Before she had her children?

TB5: I thought she was getting back into work and made that decision that work was important to her.

TB6: A drawback is we don't know how recent was that experience was then, 5 years experience could have been 10 years ago, and it doesn't say how relevant or recent is that?

TB5: That is the same for him as well.

TB4: No, ok.

TB5: Same as the other one.

TB6: That could be a drawback.

TB5: The degrees are relatively recent.

TB4: She was only nominated not awarded.

TB5: But I suppose that is quite an achievement in itself.

TB2: But 5 nominations does suggest really excellent way.

TB5: Or she scares the life out of them.

TB1: Or she has a really good handle on them.

(All laugh)

TB6: Her strength is she really enjoys the work, as well.

TB5: Yeh, I think with children so young to want to come back in part-time or otherwise it shows that you value work, you could say that the children are still young I will leave it a bit longer, but actually then not go back, which actually I am sure some people do but it seems to show that she always enjoyed her work and is keen to get back, cos it will mean a bit more time away from the children maybe, unless like you say, she is coming from full-time to part-time that puts a different spin on it.

TB2: And it is not clear.

TB5: I think even so...

TB6: We are all going to have to work twice as long than we ever were so have to have flexible working patterns earlier on to make it to the end haven't we?

TB6: With the partner working at a local school they will get the summer off so I actually feel that ...

TB2: Both of the partners are in academia – that is so nice.

TB4: So there is a possibility that if you have a crisis on, she might be able to come in.

TB2: They have someone to look after the kids.

TB6: So she might be flexible in the holidays mightn't she?

TB1: Yeh, I think both of them.

TB6: I'm sorry, I am finding this hard to pick between them.

TB5: There is not a lot.

TB2: You know what, they are so similar.

TB5: Maybe she has slightly more experience, so maybe, but then...

TB2: But on paper there is nothing between them.

TB5: From that summary.

TB2: I missed the point that she worked in a village Bank so I was thinking she was a far better candidate.

TB6: I don't know that there is not a lot between them, one has 2 one has 5, you don't know the details.

- TB5: To be honest a village Bank could be more problems, you could argue you have affluent people in a village that you don't have and they are very precious about their money management sometimes so it could be that is better, but we don't know about banking, so that is the better experience to have, we are making quite a lot of assumptions.
- TB4: She might bring some decent practices from a different bank actually.
- TB6: Here it is talking about one of the key roles for it is keeping ahead of developments, we don't know what CPD either of them has done, Claire might not have done anything with the children over the past 5 years whereas this guy who then worked 2 might be really up to date there is just not enough detail there to ...
- TB1: We are assuming that David hasn't had a break in his career whereas Clare has.
- TB5: I think we can ... I don't think we can make the assumption in either way, Clare could be reducing her hours...
- TB1: She could.
- TB5: Or going back to work, David could be reducing his hours, because of the sort of female/male slant you assume he has been working full-time because he hasn't stopped to have children but he could be the house husband and she ....
- TB2: But he could have been off for the last 5 years, as my husband has for the last year.
- TB5: Exactly that's right, we just don't know.
- TB6: So for David, for key strength, I've just put flexibility during summer in holiday, 2 years' experience, and work home life balance.
- TB1: Yeh.
- TB6: He has identified that. What else are his strengths?
- TB1: He already worked at High Street Bank, he is already working there isn't he?
- TB1: The fact he went from customer service to manager, implies when you promote within implies that um...
- TB6: Promotion within, it is a strength.
- TB2: Drawback for David was 2 years is nothing, he is less experienced, but he is going from full-time to part-time and we don't know why?
- TB5: We assume he did, we are making assumptions about that but also um...yeh... already a Customer Services Manager
- TB2: Yes he is.

TB1: But, they both have.

TB5: Have been, sort of implies that she was. Maybe that is the gender bias thing. We will find out in a minute that he is the house husband, she's the one, cos that's you know, that we got it completely wrong, all our assumptions are wrong.

TB2: She had 6 weeks with the kids.

TB5: He's had a nervous breakdown, she's.... that is the thing about interviews.

TB2: So difficult, why you need the people in front of you don't you.

TB5: For longer than we generally give them.

TB6: Much longer.

TB4: Are their degrees significant? I didn't get any significance out of them.

TB5: Just the fact that...

TB1: I don't know what Cardiff is like or Portsmouth ...how they are rated, that's the thing isn't?

TB5: A degree carries a certain ...It is more about commitment to finish the course.

TB2: Don't different universities have different statuses?

TB5: Yes, absolutely, and you know, one is English literature and one is in history, literature is maybe slightly one if more relevant in terms of customer service. I'm not sure ...they are all about...

TB2: If the University is similar, the degrees are similar.

TB5: And it also doesn't say what degrees they got, one got a First one got a 2:1.

TB2: True.

TB1: Yeh.

TB6: Yeh.

TB1: So you can you go into banking with any degrees?

TB6: You don't need a degree to go into banking.

TB5: And this is customer service, just PR?

TB6: And we don't have CPD for either them we? Drawback for either? CPD relevant courses, we don't know any of that.

TB5: We need more work history on both

- TB1: Yeh, because in a full application you would have time to ask wouldn't you.
- TB2: We don't know that.
- TB5: Looking on a more personal note for both of them, they both have a lot to offer from that summary, not an awful lot be concerned about at this stage, reasons are the same, family set up pretty much the same.
- TB1: Both are part-time, can this role be done part-time? There might be another part-timer?
- TB6: Again, we don't know.
- TB5: That's the other thing, we don't.
- TB6: Complaints need to be dealt with at the time, so yeh, we presume.
- TB4: Job share?
- TB5: Assume they are managing a service aren't they? They will have people working in the team - David is working in the Customer Service Team, the bank has decided the role can be done part-time or as a job share, again, we don't know enough about the role itself, cos that is very much an overseeing role, it doesn't say that you personally, need to have the process in place, arguably that could be done on a part-time basis.
- TB4: Shall we move on?

## **Appendix 9**

### **Semi-Structured Interview and Focus Group Coding Strategy**

#### **Preliminary Coding - Phase Three**

MMFT	Motherhood merit - mother works full-time	MMFT 1-Flexibility
		MMFT 2-Policy
		MMFT 3-Understanding and support
		MMFT 4-Team
MMPT	Motherhood merit - mother work part-time	MMPT 1-Flexibility
		MMPT 2-Policy
		MMPT 3-Understanding and support
		MMPT 4-Team
FFPTD	Fatherhood forfeit - father works part-time	FFPTD 1-Suspicion
		FFPTD 2- Mockery
		FFPTD 3-Questions coping
		FFPTD 4-Unreliable
		FFPTD 5-Unconventionality
		FFPTD 6-Concern
		FFPTD 7-Bad dad



		FFPTD 8-Judgment
		FFPTD 9-Made to feel bad about choice
		FFPTD 10-Where is mum?
		FFPTD 11- Struggling with friendships
		FFPTD 12-Sacrifies for flexibility
		FFPTD 13- Bad treatment
FFFTD	Fatherhood forfeit - father works full-time	FFFTD 1-Suspicion
		FFFTD 2- Mockery
		FFFTD 3-Questions coping
		FFFTD 4-Unreliable
		FFFTD 5-Unconventionality
		FFFTD 6-Concern
		FFFTD 7-Bad dad
		FFFTD 8-Judgment
		FFFTD 9-Made to feel bad about choice
		FFFTD 10-Where is mum?
		FFFTD 11- Struggling with friendships
		FFFTD 12-Sacrifies for flexibility
		FFFTD 13- Bad treatment
FBPTD	Fatherhood benefits - father works part-time	FBPTD 1-Flexibility
		FBPTD 2-Policy
		FBPTD 3-Understanding and Support

		FBPTD 4- Team
FBFTD	Fatherhood benefits - father working full-time	FBFTD 1-Flexibility
		FBFTD 2-Policy
		FBFTD 3-Understanding and Support
		FBFTD 4- Team
MPPTM	Motherhood penalty - mother works part-time	MPPTM 1- Unreliable
		MPPTM 2- Workplace treatment
		MPPTM 3- Unconventionality
		MPPTM 4- Bad mum
		MPPTM5- Career sacrifices
IED	Importance of equality and diversity in my organisation	
DEFGS	Definition of gender stereotypes	
GSDH	Gender stereotyping happens in my organisation	
GSDNH	Gender stereotyping doesn't happen in my organisation	
IF	Importance of flexibility for parents	
IF1	Importance of flexibility, challenges	
IF2	Flexibility is a women's issue	
MFIRST	Mum is always the first point of contact	
NBENM	No benefits, non-financial for mothers in the workplace	
NBENF	No benefits, non-financial for fathers in the workplace	
PSNSP	Parental status is not a factor in the selection process	
PSFSP	Parental status is sometimes a factor in the selection process	

PGNGS	Parents are treated the same mum or dad
IANI	Full-time mum/part-time dad isn't a problem in my organisation
ALLS	All staff are treated the same parents or not
ODM	My organisation could do more for E and D
JUG	Being a parent in the work place is a juggle

## **Appendix 10**

### **Semi-Structured Interview and Focus Group Coding Strategy**

#### **Final Coding - Phase Four**

TCTM	Think Child - Think Mum	WIM- Where is Mum?
		UNC- Unconventionality
LSFF	Less Support for Fathers	CON- Conditionality
SM	Social Mistreatment	NJ- Negative Judgement
		SUS-Suspicion
		MOCK- Mockery
		ID- Viewed as Idle
		FRI- Struggling with Friendships

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